THE *STAGE Acquitted.*

BEING

A Full Anſwer to Mr *Collier*, and the other Enemies of the Drama.

WITH

A Vindication of King *Charles* the Martyr,

AND THE

Clergy of the Church of *England*,

From the Abuſes of a Scurrilous Book,

CALLED,

The Stage Condemned.

To which is added,

The Character of the Animadverter, and the Animadverſions on Mr *Congreve*'s Anſwer to Mr *Collier*.

LONDON,
Printed for *John Barnes* at the *Crown* in the *Pall-mall*, and ſold by *M. Gilliflower* in *Weſtminſter-hall*, *D. Brown* near *Temple-bar*, and *R. Parker* at the *Royal Exchange*.
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HARVARD COLLEGE
MAR 30 1901
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Taylor fund

TO THE
READER.

I *Being the Publiſher of this* Book, *I think becauſe I may'nt be guilty of the* vanity *ſome men are, that 'tis a* juſtice *to my ſelf to let you know, I do not pretend to be the Author of it, which may ſhew, that my deſign is not to build a* Reputation *on another mans* Merit, *tho we have often* inſtances *of men that do. But it ſhall never be an* example *for me to proceed by; for I think it were worſe than* picking Pockets, *to wrong any* Gentleman *in ſuch a caſe. 'Tis true, a* Gentleman *who in my* Opinion *has not only a* good natural genius, *but the advantage of much* Learning (*as his works have already ſhewn*) honors *me with the name of* Friend. *And I ſhould think my ſelf* happy *if I knew any* qualification *in my ſelf cou'd deſerve his* kindneſs, *or acquire* favour *from any* honeſt Gentleman *of* ſenſe; *I ſay* honeſt, *becauſe ſome men imploy their Wit to* ruin *their* Fellow-creatures, *by* impoſing falſities *on them, with intent to corrupt their* Morals, *inſtead of mending 'em, (in my opinion) ſuch men if they obtain their ends may with eaſe prevail with the followers of their* Doctrine, *to be* inſtruments *in all ſorts of* villany, *&c. for ſuch I will not court their favor, and I hope I ſhall never have occaſion to fear their* Malice.

I confeſs I drew my Friend into the controverſie, *and where there is any of my thoughts in it, they are* cultivated *by him; ſo that if I ſhould ſay we writ it, I may perhaps meet with ſome of its* furious Antagoniſts, *which may fright me into an ingenuous Confeſſion of the* Truth, *as a* Gentleman *did a Painter's Boy once, who when ask'd by the* Gentleman *when his Picture wou'd be finiſh'd, anſwer'd, We were about it, Sir; upon which the Gentleman was angry, and ask'd him what he did in it? but the* Boy *to pacify him told him the* Truth, *which was, that he only held the* Candle. *The ſame Anſwer muſt ſerve from me if I am attackt. Indeed the* Scurrilous *Abuſes pointed at the Church of* England, *and the* Memory of *King* Charles *the Martyr, (in a Book call'd the* Stage Condemn'd, *was what firſt led me to have a concern in their following vindication, and the diſputes now ſo much in faſhion) which relate to the Stage. But what ſurprizes me is, that ſuch* villany *is manag'd under pretence of a* ſanctify'd zeal to virtue; *and that* virtue *ſhewn in a Nonſenſical Rebuke to the* Theatre; *which our wou'd-be* Saints *only make a* Mask *of to hide their* knavery. *Nay, one of 'em (as I think his Book teſtifies) is* a wretched canting Tool, *whoſe* Baſeneſs *is a fence to his* Brains, *that no manner of* Wit *or* Ingenuity *can get out of his prodigious* Head? The *Sences* which *Nature* gave to *Man to be Collectors of* Knowledge in him are *Burleſqu'd*, and only ſerve as an out-guard to keep *Reaſon* and *Honeſty* from having any acceſs to his *mind.* Now if this *dull mortal* would be rul'd by me, he ſhould never more betray his *diabolical genius*, or be offenſive to honeſty. For I wou'd adviſe him to find out the Author of the Animadverſions on Mr *Congreve's* Amendments to Mr *Collier*, &c. Being much of his *bulk* and *genius*, and let them both walk to ſome convenient *wood*, which *Nature* has ſtock'd with young willing

Twigs,

Twigs, and an indifferent ſtrong *Bow* of ſome *juſt Tree* may do. The *Twigs* my *Country-man* can make into a *Gad*, better than Animadvert on *Books*, which in reality may be as uſeful as a *Rope*, toward the ſatisfaction of many *honeſt* and *ingenious men*. *In Mr* Collier's Advertiſement, *at the front of his* Reply *to Mr* Congreve, *&c. I find he ſays* Honeſty is a tender point. *I hope he would not oblige us to believe his* Aſſertions *againſt his* Practice, *for in my opinion he has made bold with both his own, and that of the* Gentlemen *he has had to do with, as if he did not think it ſo, and I am apt to think that how* ſoar *and* brittle *his own may be, that of the* Gentlemen *is not ſo* eaſily Broke *by his* endeavours, *as he* imagins; *And if what we ſay of broken* Bones, *will hold good of his* tender honeſty *we may hope he will be leſs fearful of it for the future. But how does he mean? is* Honeſty ſo tender? *A real and fix'd* Honeſty *can be injur'd by no falſe* Report, *and while a man neither by* impudence *or* deſign, affords *no* cauſe of ſuſpicion, *he will have little* Reaſon *to talk of its* Tenderneſs. *I hope when he ſpeaks with the* Volunteers *that ſerve againſt him, I may find ſomething more* favourable *to the* principle *of* Honeſty, He *having been* born *with as much* (I ſuppoſe) *as any man, and uſing ſo little of it, we may expect ſome better* effects *from it, than any we have met with yet,* (eſpecially *in the* controverſie *about the* Stage). *For as I take it,* his View and Reply *both, will* juſtify *him to be a Coiner of* Prophanity *and* Bawdery, *an abuſer of* Wit, *and if his own words be true, he is a* Burleſquer *of the* Holy Scriptures *too; which I am ready to demonſtrate if deſir'd, and without* torturing reaſon *like a* vicious Prieſt, *or bringing the* follies of doatage *for* Authority, *when* deſtitute *of* reaſon.

I can't but laugh at Mr Collier's ridiculouſly malicious inſtance (*which I ſee among his other trumperies*) *of one being ſent to* Bedlam *from the* Theatre,

Theatre, *I think it might be reported with a more later inſtance of a vicious P——ſt, playing tricks in the Air, between a Houſe call'd the* Worldſend, *and* Hide Park *wall; if Mr* Collier *be curious in the matter, he may ſoon inform himſelf what Houſe he was ſent from.*

What more at preſent I have to add is but little, beſides a requeſt *to Mr* Collier, *which is, that he will favour me ſo much as not to* wreſt *my* meaning, *or turn any of my* words *to his* purpoſe, *by* changing *an* Alphabetical letter *in any of my* words, *to make me ſwear when I don't deſign it, which he will have to be no* fault *in* him. *Tho in a* Poet *'tis a wretched* ſhift, to juſtify *him from* prophane Swearing, *&c. And what cauſes me to make this* requeſt *to Mr* Collier *is, becauſe (as I take it) the changing a Letter has* power *to alter the* ſignificance *of a* word, *(eſpecially when* honeſt *men intend it ſhould do ſo) as for* example, *in the following words,* Wall, Was, War, Wax, We. *Let any man* judge *whether thoſe words have any* ſignificance *alike; if they have not (I hope)* I Gad, I Cod, *may be allow'd not to have the ſame* ſignification, *as if an* (O) *were put between the* G *and the* D, *or* G *inſtead of the* C *in the other* word. *I cou'd bring many more* words *for* inſtance, *and ſay a* great *deal on this* Subject; *but I will not detain you, Reader, ſo long from the peruſal of the* Book, *where I doubt not but you will find* reaſon *has given my* Friend *an* indiſputable victory *over his* Antagoniſt. *And that you may not be a Biaſs'd Reader, is the deſire of*

From Young Locket's,
Jan. 1ſt, 1698.

A. D.

THE

The Stage *Acquitted.*

In a Dialogue betwixt *Fairly* and *Lovetruth.*

The Stage-Condemners first Chapter answered, in vindication of the Learned and Pious Clergy of the Church of England, *from his abusive Calumnies.*

Fair. THe *Stage* Condemn'd? Without the help of so much as an *Ignoramus* Jury to bring it off? the *Title* is *bold* enough, but I hope, like other *Braggadocio's*, it says more in a word, than it will perform in the whole Volume.

Lov. As the sharping Beau in fine Cloaths without any Money in his pocket imposes on the credulous, trusting

Sempſtreſs, by his gawdy ſhew, ſo he wou'd dazle you with his glaring outſide.

F. I dare ſwear 'tis a *Hypocrite*, and profeſſes much more than it practiſes.

L. I doubt not but ſo great a Bully on the firſt meeting, will be *Calm* enough when he comes to be better known.

F. Let us to the proof of his proweſs immediately then; the *Title page*, ſince it looks ſo big, is not to be paſt over.

L. reads, *The Stage Condemn'd, and the Encouragements given to the Immoralities and Profaneneſs of the Theatre by the* Engliſh *Schools, and Univerſities, and Pulpits, cenſur'd.*

F. Hold—ſure this is the *Canon* of a General Council at leaſt, that thus ſets up for the arraigning, and condemning the *whole body* of our *Church* at once.

L. No faith, the Author is pretty *notorious* to the Town for his *impudent* impoſing falſities in *News*; and from an habitual Cuſtom of lying in political Accounts, he proceeds now to exert his *Talent* in *Eccleſiaſtic matters*; in *Caſes* of *Conſcience*; in the duties of *Religion*; and as he has many a time and often bely'd the *State*, he is reſolv'd to have one touch at the *Church* too.

F.

F. The juſtice of your *Reflections* may be queſtion'd till you give the proof of his works, for report is yet a greater lyer, than you would make *him*; and if his works contradict it, I ſhall rather credit them, than the Beloved *Scandal* of this wicked Town. Therefore pray to the firſt Chapter.

Chap. 1. p. 2. *The Stage encouraged by the Clergy.*

L. Then it cannot be reaſonably doubted but that the *Stage* is of conſiderable uſe and advantage to the *Public*; for certainly ſo eminent a Clergy, as that of the *Epiſcopal Church of England*, who have the moſt pure and uncorrupted Doctrine of all the *Chriſtian* world, who are admirable for their *Piety*, and every where valued for their *Learning*, cannot be thought to encourage what would any way tend to the Corruption of the Morals of the *Age*, as Mr *Collier* would ſeem to affirm.

F. This Gentleman, I find, tho an Enemy to the *Stage*, is a very fair one, ſince he will give it ſo *conſiderable* an *advantage*, above what Mr *Collier* has

allow'd it, and I begin to apprehend ſome very *mortal* ſtroaks from an Enemy, that allows me ſo very ſtrong and impenetrable an Armour: Sure he has ſome *ſtrange* Machines and Engines of *Battery*, that helps the Foe to ſuch formidable fortifications.

L. No faith, he's a perfect Prodigal, he's laviſh of his ready money without any Fund to reimburſe him; for to tell you the truth, I have read this doubty Author curſorily over, in a Bookſellers Shop, at times, (for I never cou'd go through him at once) but found nothing in him but *Fantaſtical Cant* and *Impudent Lyes*. But pray, like other men, be convinc'd by your own experience; and pay the ſame for your knowledge that I have done. Read, read, Sir, and ſee.

F. reads the firſt paragraph—— *If our Shepherds have no better Morals, than to feed their Lambs with the Milk of Goats, why ſhould they not expect their flocks in time ſhould come to ſmell rank, and where's the juſtice to bait and worry them when they do ſo?* Thus far he ſeems ſomething in the right; for if it be true as he ſays, that the *Clergy* have encourag'd the

Stage,

Stage, 'tis not very reaſonable for them to be angry with us for following *their* directions.

L. But you muſt not imagin he means any *Juſtification* of the *Stage* by this. No, he ſuppoſes the *infamy* of the *Stage* ſo evident, that 'tis ſufficient to fix a blemiſh on the *Clergy*, that they have ever encourag'd it, the contrary of which is moſt notoriouſly true, as has been made evident, by thoſe Gentleman who have writ in vindication of *themſelves* and the *Stage*; and it will appear ſtill more ſo, when you have heard what I have to add on that particular, tho his rammiſh ſimile here concludes only thus, much more than ſimiles uſe to conclude, *viz. That he would audaciouſly inſinuate, that our Shepherds feeds us with Corruption*; which is a bold attacque on the whole body of the *Clergy*: yet you will find anon, that he has made no general Rule, without an Exception. Dr *Horneck*, and Mr *Weſtly*, *&c.* are joyned to Mr *Collier*, and pronounc'd the only men that have perform'd the duty of *pious* Divines, and *true Shepherds*; and yet their very words juſtify *Plays* and *Moral Repreſentations* in general, and allow

the uſefulneſs of them, only condemning the *abuſe*.

F. Which is no more, than if I ſhould from obſerving this Scribblers Book, condemn the *abuſe* of the Preſs, and yet allow that it has been ſerviceable to the encreaſe of Learning.

L. Right—but Mr *R*——*th* is not for allowing all parts of their Authority; he only takes what makes for him, but leaves them when they oppoſe him. But if their *Authority* be of *any* force, it holds in all they ſay, as well as in part; elſe 'tis not *their* opinion, but *his own* that he brings; or at beſt he ſeems to confeſs, that *no* Authority is of force againſt *reaſon*, which will amount to this, that all the *Authorities*, that both he and Mr *Collier* have produc'd from the Ancient Fathers, have no farther energy, than they are conſonant to *truth*, and *good reaſon*. If ſo, I can ſee no need of their being produc'd at all; for *Reaſon* and *Evidence* are of a nature, that need no feeble ſupports of *opinions* and *faction* to make 'em receiv'd. But this is by way of Anticipation.

F. Have a care of that, taking up Rents before hand is the way to want them when quarter day comes. *L.*

L. No, no, there is ſo plentiful an Eſtate here, that I need not fear a little ſumm will be miſt: but now to the next Paragraph —— *F.* reads —— *If the Pulpit be ſo negligent, not to tell us with* Tertullian, *that the* Stage-Plays *are the chief of thoſe Pomps we abjure in our Baptiſm; or if they will needs Canonize one as a* Martyr, *and Saint, who by Royal Authority introduc'd the uſe of Maſques into his Court and Dominions on* Sundays, *and never teſtify'd his repentance for it to the world, why ſhould not thoſe that write and frequent Plays, think that they are in the path-road to heaven, as well as he? and why mayn't thoſe that diſtinguiſh themſelves from others by ſuch like performances, hope ſome time or other to bear him Company in the Calender?*

L. Ay, now the man begins to ſpeak *plain*; he lets us ſee who he is, he diſcovers the Spirit that provokes him, and the Principle that ſets him to work; he ſhews his Malice, and principally aim'd at King *Charles* the Firſt, and the *Church* of *England*, and only debaſes *Plays* to fling an odium upon that *King* and the *Clergy*. He ſeems inſpir'd with the ſame impudence with *Hugh Peters*, who when

it was urg'd that there was no precedent for trying that pious King, reply'd, *nor was there any precedent of a Virgin* Mary *bringing forth a Saviour of the world*: this from a *Stage* Poet had been *blaſphemy*, and is ſo in the *Canter*: ſee the Journal of King *Charles* his Tryal.

F. But what neceſſity is there for the *Church of England*'s adhering ſo nicely to *Tertullian*'s Doctrines? Was he *infallible*, had *he* only the direction of the *Holy Ghoſt?* He who fell into Hereſie himſelf, and is thought by ſome never to have left it; he that brought this very ridiculous objection againſt the *Stage*, *'Tis ſaid in the Scripture, that* thou canſt not add one Cubit to thy ſtature; *but in Plays the* Cothurni *made the Players much higher than they naturally were, which was to make the word of God a lyer*; *this was the Arguing of* Tertullian, *this his nice Judgment.*

L. I have heard of a *Country Curate*, that brought the ſame Text to prove high toppings *Diabolical*, becauſe they rais'd the Ladies to a loftier ſtature than Nature had given 'em. But whether the *Country Curate* and *Tertullian* were in the right is obvious to all men of ſenſe; for

for the meaning of the words are as plain and evident as the Sun in the Firmament at a clear noon; that 'tis not in the power of man to make himſelf taller than Nature or God made him in his own proper perſon: for 'tis not the effect of any extraordinary power in man to heighten himſelf by high heel'd Shoes, or Beau Peruques, or even High Crown'd Hats, as well as Commodes.

F. Beſides the abſurdity of this paragraph, there is an *notorious falſhood* in it; for King *Charles* was not the firſt that introduced Maſques, *&c.* on *Sundays*, into his Court and Dominions, it was done in the time of Queen *Elizabeth* of *Sacred* and *Happy* memory, as is evident from various Plays printed in her time.

L. But amidſt his *falſity* he has this *truth*, that the Frequenters and Writers of Plays, have no reaſon to think themſelves in the way to the Devil, when ſo *Pious*, ſo *Good*, and ſo *Religious* a man as King *Charles* the *Martyr*, gave 'em ſuch encouragement, and dy'd without declaring his Repentance, tho at his death aſſiſted by ſo learned a Divine

vine as Dr *Juxon*; and I dare ſay there is none of thoſe that frequent the Theatres, that can deſire a more *happy* and *pious* end, than King *Charles* made. So that I muſt turn my ſelf to thoſe *few Ladies* and Gentlemen, who take it for granted, becauſe Mr *Collier* has ſaid it, that Plays are *damnable*, (I mean *our* Plays, for Mr *Collier* is not, at leaſt in ſome part of his Book, for Condemning *Plays* in general, ſince he poſitively allows thoſe of *Æſchylus*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*) ſince a man ſo ſcrupulous in his Opinion, ſo cautious in his Actions, ſo chaſte in his Life and Converſation, that he did nothing that had any relation to *Religion*, without conſulting the moſt able and *pious* Divines of his time, has ſo far approv'd *Plays*, as to have them acted in his *own Palace*, and that on *Sundays*, I hope they will regard ſuch eminent examples, ſuch *Religious Divines*, and ſo good a *King*, more than the hot headed and falſe Calumnies of a buffooning *Reformer*. That our Plays are not more diſſolute than thoſe of *Fletcher*'s and *Ben*, may eaſily be made evident by conſulting the ſeveral Poets. There has been nothing ſo

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lewd as the bringing in *Bawdy-Houſes*, and the *Stallions* of *Fletcher*; no not in the Plays in the two late Reigns; ſome of which indeed ought to be baniſh'd the Stage, tho even thoſe are not without their *uſeful* Morals to the more ſtaid and better Judges.

F. For my part, the abuſe ſeems ſo *Sacrilegious*, in diſturbing the Aſhes of the dead, that I think (if I may preſume to ſpeak my ſentiments) that the *Clergy* ought to give him that Correction which is due for his impudence. But to his next paragraph. [Reads.] *If the Head, and Fathers of the Church did proſecute Mr* Prynn *for his* Hiſtriomaſtix, *and condemn thoſe for* Schiſmaticks, *who would not comply with* Laud's *Book of Sports and Paſtimes on* Sundays; *whereof* Maſques *and Opera's at Court led the Van, why ſhould not the Writing and haunting Plays be reckon'd genuin Marks of a true Son of the Church? and the contrary the Badge of one that is no true Churchman, as a certain man thought fit to expreſs it in relation to King* William, *becauſe of his not frequenting the Play-houſe.*

L. Here you have him again with a mixture of *truth* and *falſhood*, for I ſee no reaſon why what he urges in the for-

former part of the paragraph ſhould not be true, and think 'tis an honour to the cauſe to bring the *head* and *Fathers* of the *Church* in as ſuch ſtrenuous Aſſertors of the *Uſefulneſs* of the *Stage*. Mr *Prynn* had his tryal, and was caſt for acting againſt *Law*, in broaching ten thouſand *falſe* and *ſcandalous* Reflections againſt both *King* and *Church*, as well as the *Stage*; and 'tis a glory to the *latter* to have ſuffer'd with, and on account of the *former*; and all this is ſo far from a Reflection on either *King* or *Church*, as he impudently means it, that 'tis only ſo on himſelf; for he has yet ſhown us no *Evidence* in himſelf either in *Learning*, or in a Pious and Chriſtian Spirit, that ſhould make us believe him a *better* Judge of thoſe matters, than the moſt *Pious* and *Learned Clergy* that ever flouriſh'd in our *Engliſh* World, and by conſequence not inferiour to that of *any* Age or Nation whatever.

F. But for fear that would not do, he is pleas'd to inſert a villanous falſity and abuſive reflection on the *Clergy*, in telling us that a certain *Clergy-man* (I ſuppoſe of his own Church) ſhould deny our preſent *gracious Soveraign* to be a *Churchman*, becauſe he came not to the

Thea-

Theatre. Why is he ſo cautious of a name, when he's ſo liberal of his Story? only becauſe he would have the Reflection paſs from *one* particular man to the *whole* body of the *Clergy*, and ſo inſinuate, that the *Epiſcopal Clergy* are no Friends to the Government; but at once to remove this ſcandalous ſtory, no *Clergyman* could be ignorant of the unhappy cauſe of his Sacred Majeſtys refraining the *Theatre*, for all the world knows, that when Prince of *Orange*, he kept a Company of Players at the *Hague*, which Company I have my ſelf ſeen act at *Windſor* before the late King; and I have ſeen her Majeſty, of *bleſſed Memory*, our late Queen, (to the regret of all good men now dead) more than once at our *Theatre*, as has been obſerved by Dr *Pain*: and I cannot imagin that any body ſhould think it any detriment to her modeſty, to frequent a place, where both Queen *Elizabeth* and Queen *Mary* have diverted themſelves. But to proceed---*Fairly* reads----- *Let the Clergy, if they ſeriouſly deſign a Reform in this particular, ſtrike St* Ch———s *out of their Calendar, or declare their oppoſition to* Chryſoſtom, Tertullian, *and many others that may be nam'd, who thought the*

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writing and frequenting of Plays damnable without Repentance; and much more the Commanding and Patronizing of them. The beginning of this Paragragh deſerves to be anſwer'd *Fuſtibus non Argumentis*, with Baſtinadoes, not Reaſon: Who put King *Charles* into the Calendar? Why the *King*, *Lords* and *Commons* in *Parliament aſſembled*. Who ſtill approves his being there? *King*, *Lords* and *Commons* in *Parliament aſſembled*. Who would have him ſtruck out? Why Mr *R*——*th*, the formidable Author of a ſcandalous *News Paper*, and the wretched retailer of *mad Prynn's Enthuſiaſtick Cant*, and heap of ridiculous ill-form'd Rubbiſh.

L. But you ſee he ſays the Clergy muſt either ſtrike King *Charles* out of the *Calendar*, or contradict St *Chryſoſtom*, *&c.* I dare ſay he will not allow St *Chryſoſtom* in all he has written, nay, I believe he will not ſo much as allow the very *dignity* he enjoy'd in the Church; he was *Patriarch* of *Conſtantinople*, a ſort of Popiſh title, and *Lawn Sleeves* in *Greece* and here, are, I ſuppoſe, equally hateful to him. Yet ſince he has writ ſomething againſt the *Idolatrous Plays* of the *Romans* and *Greeks*, who performed 'em

in

in honour of their *falſe Gods*, his Authority is produc'd againſt thoſe of a *Chriſtian* qualification. This our Author ſaw prov'd *abundantly* before in thoſe Books that have been publiſh'd, but being incapable of anſwering the Convincing Reaſons of thoſe Gentlemen, he has wiſely overlook'd them. Well might thoſe Fathers ſay that it was damnable to be preſent at the ſolemn *Sacrifices* of the Heathens, for that was to adore ſtrange Gods; well might they forbid their Flocks the ſight of the *Gladiators*, becauſe they ſhould not be uſed to, or delight in *Murders*. Well might they deny them the ſight of naked Men and Women on the Stage, ſince ſo repugnant to modeſty. The *Pantomimes*, the *Feſcinine* Sports were not fit for *youth* to ſee, or Women, or indeed any people that were not of *Livia*'s mind, *that all things were chaſte to the chaſte*. But what has this to do with the Maſques encourag'd by King *Charles*, where is the *Immodeſty*, the *Idolatry*, the Murders of thoſe? ſo as there is no parallel in the caſe; the *Authorities* are of no force, but only to amuſe, and make a vain oſtentation: But more of this hereafter. Proceed to the next paragraph. *F.*

F. reads. *It cannot be deny'd but that* Mr Collier *has writ very ingeniously, and has taken a great deal of pains to hew and lop off Branches; and considering how much the Play-house was favor'd in the reign of King* Charles *the first, by some of the highest Dignity in the Church, we have more reason to wonder that he has said so much, than that he has said any thing too little, because that sense of antiquity, which he has repeated to us in this matter, does obliquely condemn that Prince, whom so many Ecclesiasticks of* great *note, have always accounted a great* Martyr. *Besides his Writing against Plays at present, and some of the Principal Authors of them, is not like to be accounted an Extraordinary piece of service to the Court of St.* Germains *and* Versailles, *if we consider that the restoring and encouraging* Play-houses *was one of the chief Expedients of those, who were resolved to put* Cardinal Mazarine's *Advice in Execution, in order to the better introducing of* Popery *and* Slavery; *and therefore those that reflect on* Mr Collier *for his* Non-juracy, *for his Book call'd a* perswasive to *consideration, and for his* absolving Sir William Perkins and Sir John Friend *at* Tyburn, *ought*

not

not to be angry with him for writing against the Stage.

L. I find that our Author, tho very angry with the *Clergy*, will ſpeak favourably of Mr *Collier*: I ſuppoſe that may be becauſe Mr *Collier* himſelf has not us'd them very kindly, when he has endeavour'd to deprive them of their hearers, with as much zeal, as he has to rob the Poets of theirs, tho 'tis not ſo much for Mr *Collier*'s honour to have his Praiſe and his Church abus'd in the ſame Book.

F. 'Tis ſtrange that Mr *Collier* ſhould be angry with the *Stage* for one ſingle *Say-grace*, when he has made ſo ſevere a Satire on the *whole body* of the *Clergy* that are for the Government.

L. On this bottom I ſuppoſe Mr *R-----th* hopes his Approbation; not without reaſon, ſince he could not be ignorant, that the *whole body* of the *Clergy* of the *Church* of *England* in the time of the *Martyr*, did in an *extraordinary* manner encourage Plays, and by conſequence did not believe theſe *pick'd* and *cull'd* ſentences of the Fathers againſt the *Roman* Spectacles, could be *wreſted* with any ground, or ſhew of truth or *probability* againſt our *modern*

Drama. For Mr *Collier* muſt of neceſſity either own, that Biſhop *Laud* and *all* the *Eminent* and Governing part of the *Church* at that time, with King *Charles* at the head of them, did *wittingly* and *knowingly* do what was ſo manifeſtly Condemned by the Fathers, and branded with both *Prophaneneſs* and *Idolatry*, *&c.* which is, in my poor opinion, a *heavier* Charge on the Clergy by *Infinite* degrees, than all that ever Poets can be accuſed of, if they were really guilty of what Mr *Collier* charges them with in his Chapter of *the Clergy abus'd by the Stage*, for if ſo *auguſt* a *Body* as the *Engliſh Clergy* ſhould encourage, nay (as this Author tells us) impoſe things, that are *Idolatrous*, *Profane*, and *Condemn'd* by the Fathers of the *Antient Church expreſsly*, what Obedience or even *Reſpect* can any man that values his *own ſoul* pay to them? But this ſets my blood on a *ferment*, with much more reaſon than Mr *Collier*'s by diſorders of the *Stage*, and ſtrikes ſuch a horror on me that it is unexpreſſible. If ſuch *infamous* Reflections are ſuffer'd to be made on the *Clergy* of paſt times, they are with all the eaſe in the world ſid down to that of ours. This is not

wounding

wounding the *Biſhops* through the ſides of a *Mufti*, which is furiouſly ridiculous to aſſert; but *directly* and *poſitively* to murder the Reputation of the Biſhops and *dignified Clergy* by *name*: a thing I think never ſuffer'd in any Civiliz'd Government, and worthy the notice of the Magiſtrates. Becauſe there is a Liberty of Conſcience, is therefore the Order of *Epiſcopacy* leſs eſtabliſh'd by *Law*? If the *tenderneſs* of the Members of that Church had a regard even to the Childiſh Scruples of the *Diſſenters*, does that infer a *Relinquiſhing* the *Right* given them by the Laws of the Land, and confirm'd by ſo *many* wiſe and honourable Parliaments: or *on the other hand*, Mr *Collier* and Mr *R——th* muſt conclude that Biſhop *Laud*, and the reſt of the *Governing Clergy* were ignorant of the *Fathers*, or at leaſt did not underſtand them as well as they, which implies both arrogance and folly; for the world will never be induc'd to think, by all that theſe Gentlemen have writ, that they can ſtand in the leaſt competition with them; and to charge that learned body with Ignorance, is both Falſhood, and not a much leſs affront than the former.

F. When any impartial and unbyaſs'd Reader ſhall conſider this, he muſt conclude that Mr *Collier* ought to make a *public Recantation* of that part of his Book, which quotes the Fathers of the third and fourth Centuries, when there were Corruptions enough, in both *Opinions* and *Diſcipline*, againſt the Fathers of the ſixteenth, in a thing that theſe latter cou'd *only* be Judges of, as falling *only* in their times, and ſo vaſtly different from what the former meddled with. Can Mr *Collier* refuſe this amends to the memory of thoſe venerable Prelates and Doctors, that are dead in the Lord, with honour, and a pious regard, till the impiety or fooliſh Paſſion and Intereſt of *Buffoons* and *Scribblers* preſum'd to diſturb their Sacred Aſhes, and charge them with ſuch abominable Crimes? If Mr *Collier* do really believe the Judgments, with which he threatens the Poets for fictitious *Rants* at *worſt*, and which will bear a much contrary ſenſe than what he magiſterially forces on them, he ought to expect his ſhare for violating the *fame* and honeſty of the *dead*. The Miſchief of detracting Notions is the greater, by how much the more the *Popular Miſtakes* give him the Re-

Reputation of being a man of *Wit*, (th no man of *ſound* Senſe and *true* Judg ment, can ſhew me two leaves of *tru Wit* in his whole Book; for falſe thoughts and brisk expreſſions are only qualifications of a Buffoon, which make us laugh, but pleaſes not on Reflection) whoſe Railery being cook'd to their ill palate, they devour it ſo greedily, that they are not able to digeſt it, and ſo contract a diſeaſe they will hardly be cur'd of. If Mr *Collier* think this worth his conſideration, I ſhall be glad to have contributed to his doing Juſtice; and I am apt to fancy, that the righting the Memory of thoſe Sacred Perſons, which he has ſo notoriouſly wrong'd, ought to be thought worth his Conſideration.

T. Lord, Sir, you are running away with what Mr *R——th* ſays, as if Mr *Collier* had ſaid it: Whereas Mr *R——th* only ſays, that 'tis a wonder Mr *Collier* ſhou'd ſay ſo much, ſince it *obliquely* condemns them who practis'd and taught ſo contrary a Doctrine.

F. And in this Mr *R——th* is in the right, for Mr *Collier* did not do this *ignorantly*, he knew very well the Encouragements that was given by the

Church; for if he had no other way, the Reading *Prynn*, and Stealing from him wou'd have made it moſt plain.

L. But Mr *Collier* ſeems to allow the Plays of that time more innocent than ours.

F. Which is evidently and abſolutely falſe, as the *Plays* themſelves will prove to any one that will read them: and 'tis as evident, that he by his quotations condemns the thing under all *regulation*, for that is the Point. 'Tis not the *Corruption* and *abuſe* of the thing, but the *thing* it *ſelf* that I ſtand for. I am ſatisfy'd (as all men that will think without prejudice muſt) that the *Drama* is the beſt Leſſon of Morality that can be invented by the *Wit* of man, and therefore as a *Lover* of *Mankind*, I think my ſelf oblig'd to do what I can in defence of it, let Mr *Collier*, and thoſe that have *other* aims, pleaſe themſelves in Writing againſt it; I think my ſelf ſafe enough, my *Morals* in *every* part *ſecure*, my *Reputation* nviolable for *this*, when I have ſo *Pious*, ſo *Juſt*, ſo *Good*, and ſo Learned a *Clergy*, and *King* of the ſame Opinion. I ſhall never think *Plays* offenſive to *Modeſty*, while ſo Religious a Body gives them *Authority*; nor can

that

that Authority ever be leſſen'd by ſucceeding members of that Body, without bringing an *indelible Infamy* and blot on the Church, in condemning the *ſolemn deed*, (without any tolerable reaſon) of their own *Predeceſſors*: But there's no Appearance of this; for Mr *Weſtly*, *&c.* in their Charge condemn not the *Stage*, but its *Abuſe*; and even the *Abuſe* they charge it with is generally falſe, as ſhall be made out hereafter.

L. Prithee on to the next paragraph. I'm tir'd with this, tho we have not run through it.

F. But he ſays thoſe who deſign'd Popery and Slavery encourag'd Plays.

L. Yes, yes, he ſays it; but he begs your pardon for proving any thing: that's not his buſineſs; if he can *lye boldly*, and tell a hundred odd Tales, ſeem to know much, and rail immoderately, 'tis all he aims at: Prithee proceed.

F. reads. *If all our Churchmen had done their duty, as well as Mr* Collier *has in this matter, Stage Plays had never been ſuffer'd in this Nation, nor had there been the leaſt pretence for their* uſefulneſs. *In King* Charles *the firſt's time, they were neceſſary, to ridicule the* Puritans, *and*

run down the Patrons of Liberty and Property; and in King Charles *the Second's Reign, they were no leſs wanted to laſh the Diſſenters and Whigs that oppos'd Tyranny, and needful to promote the Glorious deſign of debauching the Nation, and to baffle the Evidence of the* Popiſh Plot.

L. Hold, I find 'tis a tedious Paragraph, and not much in it.

F. To the purpoſe, but that objection will hold to the whole Book; here he owns they were Neceſſary to the King and Government, and in expoſing the *Hypocriſie* and *Nonſenſe* of thoſe Enemies of the *Church* and *State.*

L. No, no, of the *Patrons* of *Liberty.*

F. How? What were the *Puritans* the only Sticklers for *properties*? Had not the Church as much to loſe? And have they ever been remiſs in the care of the Public Good? Have they betray'd the Truſt repos'd in them by the People? Have they been falſe to their duty to the Publick Good? If the Church of *England* has been guilty of theſe Abominable Crimes, let our Author prove it, if not, how came the *Puritans* the Guardians of our Liberty? Thoſe who invaded and diſobey'd the Laws of their Country,

Country, gave not the greateſt proof of their Love to, or Zeal for it; and 'tis evident enough, that even from the time of Queen *Elizabeth*, when they firſt appear'd, the wiſdom of the Nation thought they ought to be reſtrain'd by *Law*, and were deny'd *Liberty* of *Conſcience*, for many years before King *Charles* the Firſt. 'Tis true, they have now the Liberty they then wanted, but they ſhould remember to whom they owe that *Benefit*, *viz.* to a King of the Church of *England*'s *perſwaſion*, to the very Biſhops they abuſe, to the Lords and Commons, all, or moſt of the *Church of England*; and that ſhould teach them more *modeſty* towards their *Benefactors*.

L. 'Tis not the body of the Diſſenters that is anſwerable for one mans folly. There are abundance of Good, Pious, and Learned men of that Party, who ſpeak and write with more reſpect of a Church, from which they diſſent in little more than *formalities*, ſcarce (in my Opinion) worth the diſputing about; if the firſt *Puritans* were deny'd Liberty by the Wiſdom of the Nation, for Cauſes moſt evident to themſelves, and the then Condition of the Nation: Our pre-

preſent King, (the beſt and wiſeſt of Monarchs) and the Lords and Commons have ſeen moſt weighty Cauſes for allowing a *Liberty*, which, in my opinion, is very juſt and reaſonable, as the preſent poſture of Affairs ſtands ; but make an end of the Paragraph.

F. And now by the juſt Judgment of God, the Clergy, who did but too much Countenance the proceedings of thoſe Reigns, are laſh'd and expos'd in the Play-houſe themſelves, which Mr Collier *complains of. This it's hop'd will cure their Itch of adorning, or rather diſguiſing the Doctrines of that Goſpel, with the Phraſe of the Stage, and their fondneſs of reading Plays for refining their Stile.*

L. This part of the Paragraph is only an abuſe of the Clergy, and even of God himſelf. What does the *impious* Scribbler mean by this procedure ? how does he Coin the Judgments of the *Almighty* in his fooliſh Mint, and ground them on an *Abſolute falſity*. Firſt, by his own Confeſſion theſe Encouragements were given by Divines, that are dead long ſince, and ſo there is no Juſtice in puniſhing their Succeſſors, who are no kin to them. Next 'tis abſolutely falſe that the *Clergy* of the

Church

Church of England are abus'd on the Stage, nor can Mr *Collier* or he make out any ſuch Charge; for in all the Plays that ever I have read, I never found one of them introduc'd for that end. As for Mr *Collier*'s *Chaplain*, 'tis ſo very fooliſh, I wonder he could be guilty of it, as there were no Chaplains but of the *Church of England*, when 'tis *Notorious* that of all *Chriſtian perſwaſions* where men of *Quality* and *Eſtate* are there are *Chaplains*; as for his *diſguiſing the Doctrines of the Goſpel*,---'tis Cant and Nonſenſe. 'Tis unintelligible, and ſo not to be anſwer'd. If the Doctrines be truly deliver'd, whatever Language they are deliver'd in, they are not diſguis'd; if they are not truly deliver'd, then they are not the Doctrines of the *Goſpel*; for Language is an accidental thing that varies with every age, but the Doctrines are *Eternal*, and if they are convey'd to us in terms that people underſtand, I cannot conceive how they are *diſguis'd*; but more of this anon.

F. Perhaps he prefers the Phraſe, that *Cromwel* ſought the Lord in when his Imps were murdering the King; but to go on. *Reads. No Clergy-man can pro-*

can propoſe to himſelf any juſtifyable end in reading Plays, but that which Mr Collier *has excellently perform'd, to wit, the expoſing their Immorality and Prophaneſs, and to diſcover their failures in their pretended deſign.* Here Mr *R* ——*th* is not ſo fond of the Fathers as of Mr *Collier*, for 'tis evident the Fathers themſelves read Plays on another Account.

L. He has a *peculiar*, yet *awkward paſſion* for Mr *Collier*; for he prefers him even to St *Paul*; ſince 'tis evident from Mr *Collier* himſelf, that St *Paul* read *Menander* and *Epimenides*, yet he never writ againſt the *Stage*, or diſcover'd its *failures* in its deſign. If St *Cryſoſtom* read even *Ariſtophanes*, the lewdeſt of the *Greek* Comic Poets, and other Fathers of the Church (as all that know any thing of their lives know) read all the *Ethnic* Authors for the Improvement of their Eloquence, there are other motives as juſt as Mr *Collier*'s; nay, more juſt, for what Mr *Collier* did was to find Matter of falſe *Cavils*; what St *Paul* did was to gather ſentences of *Morality* and *Eternal Truths* too from the *Heathen*, and by that ſhews that the *Laws* of Morality are the Laws of that God he preach'd; and

and St *Chryſoſtom* drew from theſe Poets not only his Eloquence, which was extraordinary, and not like the *Jejune Cant*, that this Regulator of the Pulpit as well as Stage would preſcribe; but he alſo took virtuous moral ſayings and obſervations from them. If the Fathers Authorities be good againſt *Plays*, ſhall not their practice be allow'd for 'em? If Mr *Collier*'s motives of reading Plays be the *only juſtifiable* Motive, St *Paul* was infinitely in the wrong, who, having read and quoted thoſe two *Greek* Poets, did not at the ſame time fall upon the Immorality of the Stage; nay, not at all meddle or find fault with it, when there could not have been a fairer opportunity; and this is a clear proof that he thought them ſubſervient to the promoting *Immorality*, having quoted their Authority to that purpoſe; if they were ſuch *hainous*, ſuch *diabolical* things, he did very impudently to pay ſuch a difference to their Authority, as to mix it with the word of God, without cautioning at the ſame time againſt the influence that might have to the advantage of *Plays*. But 'tis plain St *Paul* went on a much contrary Principle to Mr *Collier* and *R———th*,

viz.

viz. Truth and the Reformation of Mens Manners, and was willing to allow, and even promote what ſo viſibly and ſo evidently contributed to the end he propoſed, *the happineſs of man both here and hereafter.*

F. reads. *It is altogether unſufferable to hear a ſort of young Divines Regale our Ears from the Pulpit, with the Rhetorick of a Play, while at the ſame time they treat the ſame Phraſe of the Scripture as unintelligible Cant; and yet that this has been, and is ſtill too common among ſome of our Clergymen, cannot be denied ſo long as thoſe Writings of* Parker's *and others, which call the* new Birth *a fantaſtical Jargon, or thoſe Sermons which treat the Doctrines of St* Auſtin, Calvin, Beza, *nay, and of the Articles of the Church of* England *too, as Stuff and Cant, have an Exiſtence.*

L. What this inſolent Scribbler means by this Reflection on the *Clergy*, I don't know; is that different from other *Rhetoric?* but I ſuppoſe that he is wholly to ſeek in the nature of *Rhetoric* in general, and therefore he may be allow'd to blunder about what he has no notion of. He does not know that the buſineſs of a Divine being both to move

and

and inſtruct his hearers, he muſt take the moſt reaſonable method to that end. Now to inſtruct them you muſt he intelligible, and not ridiculous; for if they do not underſtand you, 'tis like Preaching in an unknown tongue; and to ſpeak obſolete and ridiculous phraſes, is to turn the Pulpit into a *Booth*, and the *Miniſtery* into a *Jack Pudding*; when you make people laugh at your Affectation, you deſtroy their opinion of you, and in deſtroying their opinion you loſe your Authority, and by that the efficacy of that inſtruction: But the Affectation of the language of the old Divines, in a tongue that has made ſo univerſal and great a change in ſome years, as ours has done, it wou'd be to give an unſeaſonable mirth to the Auditors, who ſhould be Inſtructed, not Regal'd with ſuch antiquated ſtuff. He has forgot the Book call'd the *Reaſons of the Contempt of the Clergy*, for there he wou'd have found that the want of Rhetorick makes the Clergy ridiculous, robs them of their juſt reſpect, but gives them no new. The Rules of true Rhetorick are drawn from Nature, and the Modes that are found conducive to the moving and perſwaſion of our hearers

to what is propos'd to them; and if it be a fault to follow the Dictates of Nature in the ſervice of the God of Nature, muſt we imagine that the God of Order, and Beauty, and Harmony can be diſſerv'd with thoſe things? Muſt *Ignorance*, *Confuſion* and *Cant* be the Marks of Right? and *Eloquence* be baniſh'd the Pulpit becauſe it is ſerviceable on the *Stage* for the ſame end. I have already ſhewn that the Fathers were of another opinion, let any man read St *Jerome*, St *Chryſoſtom*, St *Gregory*; let him that underſtands them peruſe the Homilies in their Native language, and tell me whether thoſe Fathers thought *Rhetoric* an Enemy to the *Goſpel*, and that to be a ſound Divine you muſt renounce *Common ſenſe*; and as for the Language of the Scriptures, if he means in the *Engliſh* 'tis variable, and every Tranſlation differs, and is more refin'd than the other; and it is to be wiſh'd, that it were yet brought nearer to the Language of the preſent times. Nay, I know that an eminent Divine of the *Church of England*, has now by him a Tranſlation of it in Modern *Engliſh*, and has made appear that ſome of our Sects have (in ſome things at leaſt) de-

riv'd

riv'd themſelves from the obſolete Phraſe of the Teſtament, as let your *Converſation be yea yea, and nay nay*, which implys in our Language Converſe, yes yes, and no no, and ſo on.

F. But perhaps this Spark means by his diſtinction of the *Stage* Rhetorick, that he would have the *Pulpit* make uſe of the *Scotch Eloquence*; the Book may be worth his buying, and of uſe to him, when he is thought worthy the *indelible* Character. But his Zeal makes him mad already, for he commits an outrage againſt the *Presbyterian* Divines, as well as thoſe of the Church, all the Preachers under fifty there uſing now a more modern Dialect, and more agreeable to that us'd in the Parochial Churches. He is ſo angry with the *Stage*, that he would not have the *Pulpit* uſe the ſame *Language*, I hope next time he won't allow 'em the ſame Alphabet. Next paragraph is much to the ſame purpoſe, that is to no purpoſe at all, yet if there be any thing in it, 'tis anſwer'd already by the practice of the Fathers and St *Paul*.

L. Nay, to purſue him in his falſe Reaſoning, and rectify his blunders, is too tedious a labour: he in this Para-

graph, as well as the reſt, makes it evident that the Clergy of the *Church* of *England* is the Aim of his *malicious Satyr*. But it may be ſaid of him as of another,

Tho in is heart felonious malice lies,
It does buth touch his wretched Pen and dies.

He has the common aſſurance of moſt Coxcombs, thinking it ſufficient that he *ſays* it to make it paſs for a *truth*, whereas indeed his Aſſertion ſhould be the *chief* cauſe of calling it in queſtion; he gives us no inſtance of the *Clergy*'s uſing Poetical Language of the Stage, no not one; and yet would have us believe *him* contrary to the known *truth*.

F. He is for reviving Mr *Prynn*'s quarrel, and making uſe of his blunted arms, and yet uſes them with leſs reaſon and leſs ſucceſs, if poſſible, as all *Zany*'s do. He has ſet himſelf in the place of a Synod or *Convocation*, and having aſſum'd *Authority*, that is none of his due, he uſes it as Awkwardly, and if there be no faults, he's reſolv'd to Coyn ſome right or wrong, that he may exerciſe that Authority, like the Midnight Magiſtrate,

or

or rather like one of his *Myrmidons*, he's reſolv'd to have a fray, and ſo knocks down the firſt ſober man he meets, that wou'd quietly paſs on about his buſineſs.

L. He's angry at the *Clergy* of the *Church* of *England*, becauſe they are *Eloquent*, and becauſe they are *Pious*. How comes he better acquainted with their duty, than themſelves? how comes he more honeſt or knowing? *Our Wits*, he ſays, (you don't I hope expect he ſhould prove it) *when paſſing their Judgment on a Sermon, think they give the Preacher a large Encomium, when they ſay, he has read a great many Play Books.* WhatWits does he mean? his City Wits, or his *Grubſtreet* acquaintance? I never heard this praiſe given any Divine in my life yet. I have heard the late *Pious* and *Reverend Father in God, Dr Tillotſon's* Sermons prais'd by the beſt of our *Engliſh* Poets, for the genuine *Purity* and *Chaſtity* of the *Engliſh*, and eſteem'd a ſtandard of our Language, but he never thought of praiſing him for reading Plays. Dr *South*, Dr *Sherlock*, and others, have been, and are daily admir'd for their Sermons, yet I never heard the *Wits*

give them this peculiar praiſe of reading abundance of Plays. So that this indeed is meant a Calumny againſt the Clergy. And I cannot but wonder at his Conduct in this particular, is the Church of *England* to be run down by every impudent *Scribbler*, for her indulgence in parting with thoſe Penal Laws that the *Diſſenters* from her Doctrines ſo long complained of? Yet I perſwade my ſelf, that Liberty of Conſcience does not extend ſo far, as to allow every villainous *News-monger* to villify the Clergy, and ſo endeavour to render them odious in the eye of all their Congregation; and by that means perſwade the *weak* and *fooliſh* to loſe the benefit of ſo *auguſt* a *Communion*: I am apt to believe too, that this fellow is liable to the puniſhment of the Law, for his *Inſolence* and *Calumny*; and deſerves to be made a ſecond Example, and follow his beloved Mr *Prynn* in the puniſhment as well as the offence.

F. The next page will make you amends; for there he brings his Authority to ſhew you, he has not read Mr *Prynn* for nothing.

L.

L. But what are they to the purpoſe? to make them of any force, he ſhould ſhew that our *Clergy* are guilty of what the Fathers warn the Preachers againſt. 'Tis certain St *Jerom* had no thought of condemning true Eloquence; and indeed what he has quoted only reaches a *tumid* and *puffy ſtile*, and aims at the Vices of *Elocution*, not the Virtues. I dare boldly aſſert this, that let him conſult all the Sermons that have been publiſhed by the *eminent Divines* of the *Epiſcopal Church* of *England*, he will not be able to prove one guilty of what the Fathers and St *Paul* Condemn.

F. I thought he was not in earneſt in all that he has ſaid; for now the Gentleman tacks about; he *owns* his *Error*, and will allow the *Pulpit* ſome Eloquence; nay, 'tis the *Gift* of *God*; and *Commanded* in the Preacher *Apollos*. *But he was mighty in the Scriptures, and taught diligently the things of the Lord.* Well, and what of thoſe? is there any oppoſition betwixt *Eloquence*, and the being mighty in the *Scriptures*, &c. are the Clergy negligent in teaching the things of the *Lord*? This is what he implys, if he does not expreſs it.

L. 'Tis indeed, conſidering his boldneſs, one of the ſhalloweſt Monſters I ever met with, *but none ſo bold as blind* Bayard. The next paragraph is quarrelling with itſelf too. For firſt 'tis as prophane to uſe *Stage* Expreſſions in the *Pulpit*, as to uſe Scripture phraſes in *Plays*; and immediately 'tis not ſo Criminal neither, for the Prieſt may quote an oppoſite Sentence or Verſe, either from *Greek*, *Latin*, or other Poets. Nay, the Apoſtle himſelf by his own Example has taught us to do ſo in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, 1. 12. Then I find if we had but had patience, we needed not to have troubled our ſelves with reflecting or confuting him; for here you ſee he owns that *Plays* may be read on other accounts, than Mr *Colliers*, ſince without reading them 'tis impoſſible to quote them.

F. Nay, ben't too ſecure neither; he's not ſo honeſt as you imagin, for though, like an ill taught Knight o'th' poſt, his Evidence is ſomething wavering, yet he keeps up to the main point of ſwearing falſe ſtill for the Cauſe he is paid for. For now he tells you he cou'd prove as many Sermons guilty of theſe vanities,

as

as Mr *Collier* has quoted Plays, *&c.* as many, that is ſix or ſeven, but yet for obvious reaſons he will not. For obvious Reaſons; what Reaſons? they are ſo far from being obvious, that I can find no *Diviner* yet, that can ſo much as gueſs at them. If it was neceſſary to abuſe the Clergy, as he has done, he ought in his own juſtification to have given at leaſt ſome mark of his provocation; if he was reſolved to araign them at the Bar, he ſhould have provided at leaſt two Evidences againſt them. He ſays he has a *whole litter* of Evidence, but for obvious Reaſons he will not let the Court ſee them. I fancy 'tis becauſe they have loſt their Ears, or have ſome viſible mark of Knaves, ſo that they will be of no validity in Law. 'Tis more than to be ſuſpected that he has either none at all, or thoſe very bad ones, which will be no advantage to his Cauſe.

L. It is known, ſays he, that there are many Godly perſons among our Clergy, who bewail thoſe things, and oppoſe them as much as they can. Who does he mean by *our Clergy*? 'Tis evident he does not mean that of the Epiſcopal

Church by all his defarmation of its venerable members; nor do I think him of the *Presbyterian* perſwaſion; for to my knowledge the moſt celebrated Divines among them preach in a Polite and Eloquent Language; and indeed it would be to be diſappointed in their aim to do otherwiſe, as has been already proved. He quotes St *Jerom* to *Nepotian*, that he ſhould labour more for the Groans than the Applauſe of his Hearers; I have not St *Jerom* by me to examin the ſincerity of the Quotation, but as it lies I do not very well underſtand him; for I think the means of gaining the *Applauſe* of his Hearers, is to gain their Groans, and ſo *vice verſa*. But of what Church he is I know not; I hope he is of no Chriſtian Congregation, for the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity* teaches the love of *Truth*, and forbids *Calumny* and *Falſhood*.

F. He is next for letting us know, what is *obvious* enough to any one, that the Clergy might with more eaſe get an Act of Parliament againſt the toleration of the Stage, than turn King *James* out of his Throne; this is meant as another *malicious* Reflection on the *Church*, and is equally falſe and fooliſh; for let any one

one read the incomparable anſwer to Mr *Collier*'s *Deſertion Diſcuſs'd*, and ſee whether the Church of *England* ſhook King *James* out of his Throne or not, and from thence it will appear what a malicious Libeller this is, and whether the Church of *England* has not reaſon to take the advice of a *Blockhead*, that has declar'd himſelf ſo inveterate a Foe to it; nay, being ſenſible that the venerable body of the *Clergy* will not do any thing without the juſteſt and moſt weighty reaſons in the world: that they have *Piety* and *Learning*, Judgment, and Senſe enough to direct their Conduct, without the Call of ſo *Paultry* a *Monſter*. He perhaps might fear, (if he were ever guilty of Reflection) that the Clergy finding no true ground to diſſent ſo monſtrouſly from ſo venerable a part of their Body, in their Predeceſſors, as to think that the *Corruption* of the Morals, and *Religion* of the Nation (and therefore to be ſuppreſs'd) which was by them thought ſerviceable to both, and is without controverſy ſo, and highly uſeful too; fearing I ſay, that for theſe and yet more powerful Reaſons, (if there can be any more powerful Motives than truth) the Clergy ſhould not comply with

with his *Dictates*, he ſays in another Reflection (as he thinks it) in placing all the Clergy that are not ſo blindly averſe to the *Stage* as Mr *Collier*, under the faction of Biſhop *Laud*.

L. I know a great many pious Divines that have not that *Contemptible* opinion of that Prelate, that this *fellow* expreſſes; and will think it no *Scandal* to be of the *ſame* opinion with King *Charles* and Biſhop *Laud*. 'Tis above me to ſift the Actions of ſo great a man, which are obſcurely and partially repreſented by his Enemies, and there is no judgment of the man to be form'd from them; and till I find the Conſiſtory and Body of the Clergy condemn that Prelate, as an Innovator, *&c.* I ſhall beg Mr *R---h*'s pardon, if I think with veneration of his Memory in ſpight of his *Impudence* and *Clumſey Abuſes*. But he concludes this Paragraph with his beloved abuſe of the Clergy again. But who tells him that the Church of *England* has relinquiſh'd the true Doctrine of *Paſſive Obedience*, or how can he prove, that the *ſtretch* and *extravagance* of ſome Preachers, cou'd make the extremity of *that* Doctrine the *Characteriſtic* of their Church?

F.

F. You ſee this fellow is reſolv'd not to be anſwer'd: For though it has been prov'd that the *Play Houſes* ſuppreſs'd by Queen *Elizabeth* on the Petition of the *Londoners*, were not *Theatres*, but Gaming Houſes in all probability; and if they were, that that great Queen thought it no Crime to encourage them in her *own* Court, and protect the *Players* as her own Servants; by that means raiſing them, to the eſteem and value of men of quality.

L. And here 'tis worth our obſervation, that even Queen *Elizabeth* ſhould encourage what ſhould tend to the introduction of *Popery* and *Slavery*. For either thoſe Evils are not the natural, but accidental Reſults of the *Theatre*, or they are; if they are not, then muſt they not be charg'd on the *Stage*, for nothing is criminal for accidents that proceed not from itſelf, but ſome foreign Cauſes; if they *are*, it cannot be thought ſo wiſe a Queen, and on ſo *Remarkable* a Petition, ſhould do ſo ill and weak an Action, to encourage and promote what muſt be inevitably the Corruption of the *Morals* and *Religion* of her

her People. Cou'd none of her Council, the niceſt that ever Prince was happy in, be perſpicacious enough to diſcover from either the *nature* of the thing, or the *Common Experience* of our *own*, and *other* Nations, of what damage this muſt be to her People? For whom ſhe always diſcover'd ſo *ſignal* a *love* and *tenderneſs*. Again, ſhe that underwent ſo many Perſecutions for love of the *Proteſtant Religion*; ſhe that eſtabliſh'd it; ſhe that had recourſe to the *direction* of the moſt *Learned Divines* of the Church in Religious Affairs; in fine, ſhe that was herſelf a great Scholar, and not unacquainted with *Hiſtory* and the *Fathers*; that ſhe, I ſay, from none of theſe helps ſhou'd find out that the *Stage* was *Profane*, *Idolatrous*, and a *Corrupter* of *Religion* and *Morality*, ſhews that either ſhe and her *Spiritual* directors were more Ignorant, or leſs Pious, than Mr *Collier*, and Mr *R———th*, or that there is no ſuch thing in *Plays*, as they pretend. The firſt there is no ſhadow of a reaſon to *conclude*, and the latter is evidently true; for it has been already by divers Authors made appear, that as the end of the *Drama* is the *Correction*, pu-

puniſhment of *Vice*, and reward of *Virtue*, the purgation of our paſſions, *&c.* ſo that there is no better *human way* to that end. Thus we ſee that King *Charles* the *Martyr*, was not the only *encourager* of *Plays*. Queen *Elizabeth* too did the *ſame*, whoſe *Authority* even our *Scribbler* ſeems to allow, or if he did not, Mr *Collier*'s Conceſſion in his Introduction (almoſt the *only* truth in his Book) is enough to juſtifie both *her*, and *King Charles*, and even the preſent *Clergy*, for not complying with our *Jehu*'s fury, in ſuppreſſing that *School of Virtue* the *STAGE*. If it is Corrupted let it be Reformed; but of that hereafter.

F. Tho he brings proofs already *publickly* and *clearly* confuted, without any reply to that *Confutation*, tho he brings monſtrous and incredible *lyes*, as the printing of 40000 Plays in two years; the ſcandalous ſtory of Mr *Atkinſon*, a Miniſter in *Bedford*, and other *Clergymen*; yet ſince he has furniſh'd us with ſo good Authority as a Sermon preach'd in *Oxford* (the nurſery of *Religion* and *Learning*) the Books of Dr *Gager*, Dr *Gentiles*, and Dr *Caſe*, in defence of *Stage-Plays*, he has merited ſome par-

don.

don. Since the Controverſie was then *public*, the King cou'd not be ignorant of what cou'd be ſaid againſt it; had ſeen the Arguments *pro* and *con*; thoſe learned Divines had gained the point, and *remov'd* all Scruples, and ſhew'd him it cou'd be no injury to *Religion* to encourage *Moral Leſſons*; and that the *Pharaſaical Sabbath Idolaters* were not to over-ballance the weight of right Reaſon, ſince the Laws of *Morality* were as *Eternal* as thoſe of the *Myſterious* part of *Religion*, and equally conducive to the good of Mankind, and the Glory of God the Author of Mankind. But this indeed anticipates the next Chapter, to which pray now let us proceed.

An Answer to his Second Chapter in Vindication of King Charles *the First*, &c.

L. WEll, I thank my Stars we have remov'd the Rubbish of the Portal, and have with some pains made way for our entrance; tho I confess 'tis an odd undertaking, to press into the house; when at the very door you meet with such a stench that almost strikes one down.

F. Why, it has been the lot of a great Hero to cleanse Stables, infamous for their filth; and what *Hercules* has thought worthy his, we may think not unbecoming our pains; publick good overcomes, or ought to overcome all other Considerations; and to expose a Knave and a Fool in his proper colours is none of the least meritorious service to the Public.

L.

L. Hold, hold, good words I pray you Sir; *Knave* and *Fool!* have a care, a *Sanctify'd* oppoſer of the *Profane* Stage deſerve ſuch paw names?

F. That I can't tell——But I'm ſure none but a *Fool* wou'd leave a thing he has excell'd in to a Proverb (*falſenſſes*) for a thing ſo very foreign to his talent as Arguing. And he is little leſs than a Knave, that from his private ſtation ſets himſelf up for a Judge of *Kings* and *Biſhops*, famous for their *Piety* and *Virtues*. Nay, when he preſumes to call the Wiſdom of the Nation in queſtion, for celebrating that day their predeceſſors in ſo many Parliaments have confirmed, for the memory of what our Scribbler wou'd have forgot, or juſtified.

L. Truly Mr *Collier* has got a fit yoke-mate in his undertaking; he that was for the Aſſaſſination of one King, ſhou'd be belov'd and careſs'd by him that Impudently defames and blackens another; nay, and as far as in him lyes, puts his Memory to a more cruel death, than his Good Friends: Friends of 48 did his Perſon. I can't imagin on what ground he preſumes on this Liberty,

in

under a Government, that unanimouſly aſſerts the *honour* and *merit* of the King he abuſes, and under a King who derives himſelf ſo nearly from him.

F. But you find he tells you King *Charles* the firſt was a Tyrant, Witneſs-Ship Money, *&c.*

L. Thoſe points are diſcuſs'd enough already, both by that bleſſed *Martyr* himſelf, and *Dalſon*, and almoſt all the eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, who have writ on that Subject. But were it true, that King *Charles* had been guilty of any fault in the former part of his life, nay, granting that his permitting or ordering Maſques, *&c.* were ſo Criminal as this Scribbler pretends, cou'd that hinder him from being a *Martyr*? is he ſo ignorant of the ancient Hiſtory of the primitive *Martyrs*, and *Fathers* of the Church, as not to know how many of them gave far leſs preſages of Martyrdom than King *Charles*? has he forgot the youth of St. *Auſtin*, and yet quotes his Confeſſions? pray what preſage did he give of what he afterwards prov'd.

F. Nay, my good Friend, you muſt not expect much Candor from him, for

Reaſon and Candor are no part of his Character, *Railing* and *Contradiction* he ſeems moſt pleaſed with, and pray let him enjoy his *beloved infamy* without a Rival. But to do him juſtice, he has given Mr *Collier* a greater blow than the *Stage*, in producing ſo weighty a Teſtimony in defence of it, as the *body* of the *Engliſh* Clergy, and ſo good a King as *Charles* the Firſt was, if we ſhall prefer the *Calumnys* of this Fellow, and his Maſter Mr *Prynn*, to the *opinion* and *ſentiments* of the moſt Learned and moſt Pious Clergy in the world; who, in ſo many Sermons, in ſo many Books, have given a ſucceſſive *Encomium* on his *Virtues*, his *Religion* and *Morals*.

L. Nay, does not the Parliament it ſelf ſhew the ſame value, when on the 30th of *January*, they in a *Body* every year go to hear the praiſes of that *Prince* in the Church, from that Pulpit whence the *Eternal* Truths of the *Goſpel* are taught; have they not all along ſo far approv'd this, that they have deſir'd the Sermons to be printed? and yet the impudent and ſcurrilous *News-monger* dares without fear of the loſs of his ears, abuſe both *him* and *them*. If this be the

the *Liberty* of the Preſs, 'tis high time to take it away; if this be the *Liberty* of Conſcience, the reſt that enjoy the benefit of it, are ignorant of their advantage.

F. Yet in this he is more juſt than Mr *Collier*, who, when he was ſtealing out of the ſame Book, cou'd overlook ſo great a defence of the *Modern Stage*, and borrow ſo many invectives againſt it from the Fathers, which have no relation to it.

L. Tho that has been ſo evidently prov'd, that nothing can be more ſo, yet this Gentleman takes no notice of that, but pronounces as if *uncontrovertible truth*, that the Fathers were againſt the *Stage*: So that he can't ſo much boaſt of his Honeſty neither above Mr *Collier*; for though he gives you the Teſtimony of the Modern Fathers of the Church for the *Stage*, yet he does it with a deſign of abuſing them, not of paying any reſpect to their *Authority*. So great an advantage it is to the old Fathers to have writ ſo many years ago, and that they had ſo good Cauſe to write againſt the *Stage* of their age, where *naked People appear'd*, where lewd *Geſticulations*

were us'd, and where the *very Gods were ador'd*; for the Theatres were dedicated to *Bacchus*, and the very Plays were a ſort of *Sacrifice* to the Gods: tho all this has been made ſo evident, I ſay, yet our *Enemies* to the *Stage* leap over all theſe things, as of no moment, *becauſe*, if they own'd this truth, they muſt confeſs (what they are unwilling to do) that all this noiſe about the Fathers is nothing to the Controverſie in hand, and only brought in to amuſe the ignorant, and impoſe upon the weak and ſuperſtitious.

F. They will never be able to prove with any *ſhew* of Reaſon, that there is any parallel betwixt the *Roman* and *Engliſh Stage*.

L. True; for you find Mr *Collier* tells you, that the *Engliſh* is much more debauch'd.

F. He ſays it indeed, and proves it as he does other things, by half quotations, and omitting what makes againſt him: by extenuatiug and gloſſing over what *Plautus* and *Terence* have writ, and aggravating and wreſting the genuine meaning of the *Modern* Poets. For here his Friend *R—th* is againſt him, and

and tells you, that *Æneas Silvius* would not have Maſters read the Comic or Tragic Poets to youth, without great caution, and that *Ignatius Loyola* forbid *Terence* to be read in the Schools without Caſtration.

L. Prithee 'tis no wonder that theſe two Authors ſhould contradict each other, tho of a ſide, for Mr *R*——*th* is ſo obliging to contradict himſelf, more than once in a few Leaves, as we have ſeen, and ſhall ſee again. Nay, the Poets may well excuſe him for forbidding their Works to be read, ſince he is denying us a part of the *Scripture* too, as *pernicious* to *modeſty*; and the *Divine Song of Songs* is to be caſheer'd, only I believe, becauſe it has ſomething of Dialogue and Poetry in it, and is as St *Jerome* calls it, the firſt and beſt of *Paſtorals*.

F. Perhaps our *Scribbler* is of the opinion of *Grotius* and ſome Moderns, that it was only a *Love Poem* of *Solomon*'s to his *Egyptian* Miſtreſs, *Pharoah*'s Daughter.

L. If a *prophane Poet* had ſaid what this Gentleman ſays, it had been Blaſphemy, and had call'd down all the

Judgments of Heaven on his head, but a *ſanctify'd News-monger* may write any thing againſt the *Scripture*, and bring any villainous Authority to leſſen it, without blame, becauſe he writes againſt the *Stage*.

F. Well, this Stage is a frightful thing, it muſt ſure be the Houſe of *Dagon*, as *Buſſy* calls it, that it can engage ſo much zeal againſt it, and that zeal ſo forcible and meritorious, as to juſtify *Lies*, make *dulneſs Wit*, and *Truth* and *Virtue* hateful.

L. I think ſince 'tis made ſuch a *Bugbear* of late, it will not be amiſs to examin a little ſuccintctly what it is, becauſe by a fair ſtating the eaſe, we ſhall a little juſtify King *Charles*.

F. For my part, I think Mr *Collier*, if he be a Member of the Church of *England*, is oblig'd to take him to task in the point, and to lay that Devil which his Conjuration has rais'd. But I ask pardon of the Church of *England* for the ſuppoſition, whoſe Pious and Learned Fathers have ſufficiently confuted his Opinions and cenſur'd his Actions.

L. Nay, Mr *Collier* is a fortunate man, I confeſs, whoſe *ipſe dixit* is of more

more force now, than the Philoſophers of old; for *Evidence* and *Truth* loſe their Names and Nature, when he's againſt them.

F. Had I an ill Cauſe to defend, he ſhould be my advocate before a hundred of more wit and learning, for what *Hippocrates* ſays of a Phyſician, will hold here, *chooſe him more for his Fortune than his Skill.*

L. But none but one party denies that his *Deſertion* was not as fully, as modeſtly anſwer'd, whereas both ſides will now have it, that his charge on the *Stage* is not refuted, and he (who will always have the laſt word), has writ again you find, to juſtify his former Book.

F. I cannot imagin what theſe Gentlemen call anſweriug, if he be not fully anſwered, when *all* his *aſſertions* and *quotations* are prov'd falſe, or nothing to the purpoſe. He charges the *Stage* with *obſcenity*, but the inſtances he gives when fairly repreſented are pure and innocent. He proceeds to *Immorality.* There he wreſts, ſcrews, and tortures words ſo manifeſtly from the Poet's Senſe, that nothing can be plainer,

and has again recourſe to falſe quotations, as he has indeed every where, and thus he proceeds through the whole, and is found out in all his foul *play, and yet he is not anſwer'd* ! If his Friends will not allow theſe for falls, I confeſs they are men not to be wreſtled with.

L. But quitting this Point till we conſider his *new Birth*, let us proceed to the *Stage*, from whence we digreſs'd.

F. Right, and ſince Mr *Collier* is a man of ſo prevailing an Authority with the Town, I ſhall in vindication of the *Stage*, and, in that, of King *Charles* the Firſt, and Biſhop *Laud*, ſhew from his own words, the extraordinary Advantage of it in the introduction of his Book. *The buſineſs of Plays is to recommend Virtue and diſcountenance Vice ; to ſhew the uncertainties of human* Greatneſs, *the ſudden turns of Fate, and the unhappy Concluſion of Violence and Injuſtice : 'tis to expoſe the ſingularities of* Pride *and Fancy, to make Folly and Falſhood contemptible, and to bring every thing that is ill under infamy and neglect.* Here it appears that King *Charles* cou'd not have thought of a better *entertainment*, for the *Sundays* after *Evening prayer*, than a diverſion, which

which tended to the confirmation of the Doctrine of the day ; in purging our minds even in our Recreations from thoſe faults which might have crept into our *morality*, that is, in our duty to God, our ſelves, and our Neighbours ; by ſeeing the lively *examples* repreſented before our Eyes, of Vice puniſhed and Virtues rewarded, to be the fatigues and folly of a virtuous life, truly and pathetically preſented to our view, and ſo fixt with our ſports in our minds, more *efficaciouſly*, than by a bare precept. 'Tis no new ovſervation , but confirm'd by the conſent of all Mankind, that *Example* is of more force than *Precept*, and therefore the bringing ſuch *Examples* that may move our Averſion to Vice, and our Love of Virtue, was a deſign worthy both the day and the King ; for the *Maſques* or *Plays* was but a continuing the inſtruction, and fixing it in the minds of the Auditory.

L. But you find Mr *Collier* ſays, the *Engliſh Stage* has not put that deſign in execution, that they have forſaken their aim, and turn'd the weapon of *Virtue* againſt itſelf, and ſo loſt that admirable uſe, which it would otherways be of, as he Confeſſes.

F. He ſays it indeed, but has been far from proving it; nay, if it were granted him, that all he has urg'd was as true as 'tis falſe, for from particulars there can be no general concluſion, and though there were ſome *exceptionable* paſſages in *ſome places*, yet that wou'd be but a very lame *argument* againſt all: And beſides, if *Vice* muſt be puniſh'd, as he confeſſes, it muſt of conſequence be repreſented: and if repreſented what the vicious ſay, muſt be according to their Character. The *Athenian Stage* ſeems to be allow'd by Mr *Collier* and his Party as a pattern for us; and *Euripides* in particular, is by him much extoll'd as *unexceptionable*, and yet if it were a fault to introduce *vicious Characters*, none has been more faulty: For example. In the *Cyclops*, *Sitenus* is introduc'd as a *Glutton*, *Drunkard*, *Perfidious*, *Mercenary*, &c. nay, and *lewd* too, for being now heated with the Wine which *Ulyſſes* gave him, he begins to queſtion him ſomething *waggiſhly*, *whether all the* Græcians *did not take a touch with* Helena *after the taking of* Troy. The expreſſion is more immodeſt, than any thing in our Modern *Plays*. *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*

laus have in the 2d Act of *Ephigenia* in *Euclid*, a quarrel about ſacrificing *Ephigenia*, but when on the news of her arrival, *Menelaus* obſerves the pangs of his Brother's Fatherly Love, he relents, and is for perſwading *Agamemnon* to ſend her away again; but *Agamemnon* tells him, 'tis in vain to think whilſt *Ulyſſes* knows it; that *Calchas* will not ſuffer it, for that *Prieſts or Prophets are a proud imperious Generation*, &c. The Meſſenger in the *Helena* of *Euripides*, that comes to bring news of the vaniſhing away of the *Aerial Phantom*, that *Menelaus* had brought from *Troy*, when he found that the real *Helena* had been all the while virtuous, and conceal'd by the arts of *Juno*, and the help of *Mercury* in *Ægypt*, and that ſo many thouſand *Greeks* and *Trojans* had loſt their lives for a meer ſhadow or Phantom, exclaims againſt the Folly of Divination, and the ignorance of Prophets, *&c.*

L. You have again digreſs'd from vicious Characters in Plays, to thoſe that have ſpoken with ſmall reſpect of the *Prieſts.*

F. I own my fault (tho 'tis not wholly uſeleſs, ſince the Modern Poets by

by this, will not be found to be the only tranſgreſſors in that particular) and to return, *Pantheus* is impious, *Medea* Revengeful, *Bellerophon* Covetous, and ſo on. But the mentioning of this laſt, puts me in mind of what happen'd in the *Athenian Theatre* on the acting *Bellerophon*, he makes a long Speech, which is ſtill extant, in praiſe of *Covetouſneſs* and *Money*, on which the whole Audience roſe up to drive the Actors off the Stage; but the Poet himſelf appear'd, and deſir'd them to have patience till they ſaw the end of that *Miſer*. They had heard with ſo juſt an indignation, this nice Audience were ſatisfy'd with this, and Applauded the Play in the puniſhment of *Bellerophon*. Our Stage Condemner would, I doubt not, have accus'd the *Athenians* of diſcouraging Induſtry, for their not liking a *Miſer*, ſince he will have Sir *William Davenant* guilty of abuſing the Citizens for ſpeaking againſt *Covetouſneſs*. Is Covetouſneſs then a Virtue ſo ſacred, that it ought not to be expos'd to the contempt and hatred of Mankind? It has been thought by the Saviour of Mankind, the moſt pernicious of vices; the young man in the Goſ-

Goſpel kept the Commandments, but would not quit his *Pelf*, he was an induſtrious thriving Trader, and was not to be rebuk'd. I find by him and ſome other writers of late, that a *City* is as ſacred as the *Gown*, and not to be toucht. If a Citizen by extortion and oppreſſing the poor that work for him, get a great Eſtate, the name of *Induſtry* conſecrates his Vice, and the denomination of Citizen is his ſecurity againſt being reflected on. If there are ſuch vices in the *ſober party*, as he calls them, why muſt not they be laſh'd? Oh! It wou'd diſcourage *Induſtry*. No, it wou'd incourage true *Induſtry*, by ſhewing the odiouſneſs of that, which is falſe; and ſome men then would be content that *poor labouring Craftsmen* ſhould get bread under them, tho they left ſome twenty thouſand pounds leſs behind them, to build Hoſpitals after they are dead, for wretches that are to be made ſo, as they have made many. 'Tis not to diſcourage *Induſtry* to be ſevere upon *Uſurers*, and the oppreſſors of the poor, if we may believe the Holy Scriptures. I am of opinion that if the *Plays* had not expos'd the *darling* ſins of the *Saints*, the

the Saints had not been ſuch violent Enemies to the Stage: For if they were ſuch ſincere lovers of Virtue (as King *Charles* the Firſt was) they would encourage all the *Acts* and *Means* that could be invented for the checking all manner of Vices, and the encouragement of Virtue. On the contrary, when they muſt know that the buſineſs of the Stage is to expoſe Vice and Folly, they ought not to declare themſelves ſuch utter Enemies to the Stage, which is a *Foe* to *Hypocriſie*, and *falſe pretender to Virtue and Religion*; that gives us the mark of falſe Brothers, ſo that they may be known to thoſe that might elſe be deceived by 'em; this makes the *Hypocrite*, the *Knave*, the *Uſurer*, the *Fool*, the *Pedant*, &c. Enemies to the Comic and Tragic Poets perfomances: They wou'd keep the Appearance of Virtue, but wou'd not go to the expence of the Reality, and the Prophane Poets will rob them of their diſguiſe, and ſhew a *Rogue* and *Fool* in their proper Colours. 'Tis no wonder therefore that Mr *R——th* ſhould be an Enemy to thoſe Plays, which King *Charles* and the Church of *England* encourag'd, for the

the King was a lover of *Truth*, *Sincerity*, and *good Morals*, but the *News-monger* fond of the fund of his Trade; does not love to have it put to the hazard of being loſt, by the plain dealing of the Stage. But let us examine even from his own quotations, the ſubject of his Maſque, which he attacks in his 2d Chapter, entituled, *Britannia Triumphans*, and ſpight of Mr *R——th*'s zeal for *Impoſture*, ſee if the expoſing Falſhood be not a good proſecution of the buſineſs of the *day*, in which they were taught to value the Doctrine of *Truth*, to love our Neighbour as our ſelves, to love our Enemies, and to do as we would be done by, for this is the aim of all the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, except *that ſoveraign Law of loving God above all things*, for a rule which Chriſt gives us the love of our Neighbour, with this reaſon, how can you love God whom you never ſaw, if, *&c.* Now the expoſing *Impoſture* was to take away a notorious enmity to all theſe admirable Doctrines. I ſhall not much meddle with his fooliſh Remarks on the dreſs of *Impoſture*, if it be any Satyr on the graver ſort, 'tis he, not the Poet that makes it; he

is

is the explainer of the Dream, and like other Interpreters of Viſions and Dreams, is anſwerable for the Follies he coins out of 'em. The dreſs is adapted to the Character, and it was neceſſary to give *Impoſture* a dreſs, that ſhou'd diſguiſe him, becauſe he is generally ſo, elſe he wou'd not be miſchievous, for every one wou'd avoid a known open Cheat. So that this is ſo far from a *reflection* on the *graver ſort*, that 'tis a compliment to 'em, by ſhewing that to make the Devil appear like an Angel of Light, he was feign to borrow the beſt outſide he cou'd find: But 'tis next to his Folly to purſue him in all his Fooleries. For I ſee nothing that bears a ſhadow of reaſon in the Chapter, he *awkardly* miſtakes Mr *Collier*'s ill nature, and wreſts, without Wit, or the very *apeing* of Wit, the beſt meaning to a *pernicious* and *falſe ſenſe*: and all that I can gather from it, is, that rather than not be againſt the *Stage* he'll be againſt the *Government*; and rather than not abuſe King *Charles* the *Martyr*, he will abuſe both *Lords* and *Commons*, nay, and the very *Diſſenters themſelves*, tho he

wou'd

wou'd ſeem a member of that Body. For when the Poet here brings in Impoſture ſpeaking againſt *Epiſcopacy*, he will needs have it mean the *Fanaticks* or *Diſſenters*; they are oblig'd to our *Drawcanſir*, who ſpares neither *Friend* nor *Foe*. But is it ſo unpardonable a Crime, for a Friend of Epiſcopacy to jerk its Enemies and that for what they were guilty of? he follows not his own Rule; he is for very unmercifully dealing with King *Charles*, only becauſe he was no Friend to the *Anti-Epiſcoparians*, for no reaſon can I find elſe for his inveteracy.

L. He is angry with Sir *William* for denying the depravation of Human Nature (which is falſe too) and Mr *Collier* he is angry for calling the deprav'd appetites of Eating and Drinking Whoreſon *Appetites*. What can a Poet do? let him ſpeak well or ill of human Nature he muſt offend Mr *Collier*, or Mr *R——th*, but he is ſo very whiffling a Coxcomb, that his objections are too weak to be minded, and too malicious to influence any man.

F. 'Tis very true; yet ſince I find ſome few take him for a *Goliah*, it will

not be amiſs to knock him down with a Pebble.

L. Faith 'tis a ſort of Cowardice to quarrel with a man whoſe Valour is but ſuſpected, for none but a Poultroon will twegue a known Coward by the Noſe: to fall upon ſo Impotent a *Scribbler* is but to triumph without the danger of a Battel, and to be ſtout when one is invulnerable.

F. And yet you find *Achilles* got a name by Attacking the *Trojan* with his invulnerable Skin.

L. But *Achilles* wou'd not ſtrike *Therſites*, tho provok'd by all his railing; and this Gentleman is no more than the very *Therſites* of the *Cauſe*; and 'tis a ſort of Scandal to take notice of him.

F. But had *Therſites* fallen into an Age, where his Railing wou'd have paſs'd for Wit, and his *Malice* ſupply'd his want of Brains, he wou'd have found ſome Modern *Hero* that wou'd have made his Bones ake. So ſince Scandal is ſo pleaſing a Pill that it goes glibly down without any *Vehicle*, 'twill be excuſable if you throw away a little time to oppoſe it. *Dulce eſt deſipere in loco*, to play the fool ſometimes is not dif-

diſagreeable; and you know ſpeak to a fool in his folly: when once a fool aims to be miſchievous, he ſhou'd be taken care of, and all his fancy'd edg'd tools taken from him. Therefore, I ſay let's go on with our Reflections. Since he has blunder'd on ſome objections (or rather ſpoils 'em in tranſcribing) of abler heads; and ſince he has laid it as a charge againſt King *Charles* the Firſt, that he order'd Plays and Sports on *Sundays*, which point we have not yet enough conſider'd.

L. The right way to clear that is, to conſider the weight of the objections of Mr *R—th* and Mr *Collier*, for tho Mr *Collier*'s be better dreſs'd, the ſame purport of Mr *R——th*'s *Jargon* is much the ſame. Mr *Collier* has more ſenſe, and a brisker way of delivery, Mr *R—th* the greater ſhare of *Malice*, and impotent dulneſs, but what may be deduc'd from both towards the making Plays and Maſques, *&c.* ſeem an *Ill* may be brought under theſe heads, which Mr *Collier* and *R——th* has given us, *Immodeſty*, *Profaneneſs*, *Vanity*, and the reſt, for Mr *Collier* ſeems to allow it uſeful and advantageous to the *refining*,

not the *corrupting* of *Morals* and *Practice* of the *Age*, if pure, as in its first Institution: but our hot-headed *Cato* here is for cutting it up *Root* and *Branch*, *right* or *wrong*, without *Reason*, without *Justice*; he is not acquainted with, or mov'd by such trifling things as *Reason* and *Public Good*; it is enough that 'tis a *Stage*, that, and *Mince Pyes* are *Pagan* and *Antichristian*, under all *Regulations*; the Pastry-Cooks and Poets must lose a branch of their Employ, for so our wou'd be *Saints* will have it. *Steeple-houses* have been as much their *aversion*, and exclaim'd against violently. In the primitive time no Magnificent Piles were rais'd to the *Living God*, but to the Idols of the *Devil*; and this furnish'd a thoughtless generation with *Cant enough against all adornments of the house of God*; but as their Souls were Slovens in Doctrine, they affected the outward form of *Godliness*, more than inward, and deny'd respect to the highest in public building. These people are against the *Stage* only because it teaches a Doctrine that is to them *Heterodox*, *Sincerity* and *Good Actions*, Love of our Neighbour, and Care of ourselves; gives us the

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Land-marks of *Hypocriſie*, and *deſigning Knaves*, and ſets up the Buoys to make us ſteer clear of the Flats and Shoals of *Vice* and *Follies*; and ſhou'd this Doctrine prevail, how wou'd their *Induſtry* thrive? But to declare againſt the *Stage* on *this* account wou'd be to *ſpeak out of their Character*, which theſe Saints never do but when ſuch a Poet as Sir *William D'avenant* makes 'em in an *Impoſture*; and therefore they attack it under a falſe pretence, and bring the Artillery of the Fathers againſt what they never thought of. For that they approv'd the manner of inſtruction of a Play, is evident from ſome of their writing *Plays* on Religious ſubjects, as St. *Gregory of Nazianzen* on the Sufferings and Paſſion of Chriſt.

F. I wonder Mr *Collier* ſhou'd overſee that Father, for ſure if it were lawful to repreſent ſo awful and ſacred a thing as the *Sufferings of God for the redemption of Mankind*, in a *PLAY*, the meddling with ſome part of Scripture in Plays, and referring to ſome ſtory of infiniteley leſs importance, cannot be ſuch a Crime as is pretended.

L. Lookye, Friend *Fairly*, if you imagine that ſo ſacred a thing as *Truth* was the aim of either of theſe *Authors* you are extremely deceiv'd; no, no, 'twas *Victory* and *Money*, *Pride* and *Avarice*, that prompted their Pens, and muſt of conſequence have other aims that are more anſwerable to the nature of the Cauſe. They had both heard of the Proverbial ſaying, *Cœlum niare fortiter & aliquid adhærebit, Beſtow but Calumny enough, and ſome of the dirt will ſtick.* The bulk of Readers are byaſs'd by other things than *Truth* or *Good Reaſon*, and when you once get the current tyde of the popular opinion of your ſide, you need not value all the efforts of Wit or *Reaſon*. The very ſtyle of Mr *Collier* does not promiſe any ſincerity, or that he aim'd at *Truth* or *Inſtruction*. Witticiſms and *Buffoonry* pleaſe the fancy, and impoſe on the judgment, or rather indeed deprive weak Judgments of the uſe of their *office*. He deſign'd to make his Book a very taking piece with the middling Readers, and has adapted his ſtile and expreſſion to their Capacity, the *Didactic* wou'd have oblig'd him to cloſer reaſoning, and robb'd him of

all

all his unſeaſonable gayety ; wou'd have led him a plainer way to *Truth*, and by conſequence have depriv'd him of the profit of another Book in vindication of the former, and you know every man muſt live by his trade.

F. But we generally paſs our judgments upon mens honeſty by the Employment they chuſe, and few will think a Bayliff or an Informer, *&c.* men of overmuch honeſty. A *Quack* muſt live by his *trade* too, as you call it ; a *Bawd*, *Pimp*, or Uſurer may be *Induſtrious* in their occupations, but that will ſcarce raiſe their eſteem with Judges that are diſintereſted.

L. As a proof of Mr *Collier*'s ſincerity, the very *topic* of Immodeſty is remarkable, as has been ſufficiently made out by the Gentlemen that have anſwer'd him ; and will yet farther appear when we remember the difference of Cuſtome betwixt the hot Climates where *Euripides* recites and ours. That wou'd have been *Immodeſt* to a great degree in them, which in our Ladies is moſt Innocent and *Modeſt*. The Cuſtom of *Greece*, both then and now, requir'd a perfect preclusion of the Wo-

men from the Men, but we have a freedom of Converſation here. It wou'd have been thought Infamy for a Woman to have been ſeen bare-fac'd there, and here 'tis thought a ſort of *Decoy* or Call to a man to find a Punk by, to go Mask'd; here *Love* and Gallantry is the frequent ſubject of diſcourſe in the moſt nice and refin'd Converſation, there nothing but action ſucceeded opportunity; the reſtraint of the Women was the effect of the Jealouſie of the Men; and had, I ſuppoſe, little better effect on them, than it has on the *Italian* and *Spaniſh* Ladies in our days; it makes them run any hazards to wrong their Husbands, and proceed to the Impudence of our Proſtitutes, who muſt be profligate indeed to fall to without Ceremony, as the *Spaniſh* Lady, who found fault with *Calprededes* Lovers for talking, and not acting *Love* together, and alone. The *Manners* of our *Stage follows* the *Manners* of our Country, and 'tis no more Immodeſt in making Women talk of Love *there*, than they are really guilty of Immodeſty in thoſe diſcourſes in *Converſation*. The virtue of our Women is built on a better foundation than

than Reſtraint, which is the ſureſt way to deſtroy it, as is evident from all thoſe Countries where 'tis practic'd. Now when Mr *Collier* cou'd not be Ignorant of this difference, he did not do fairly, nor of conſequence very honeſtly to charge the *Engliſh Stage* with deſtroying the Character of the Sex becauſe it differs from that of *Athens*, in a thing in which the Cuſtoms of the Nations are ſo very different.

F. This gives you a good opportunity to make a few reflections on what they both ſeem to be particularly piqu'd at, and *R*——*th* is in an Indignation at the very meeting of an *Amour*; like *Eumolpus* in *Petronius Arbiter*, who could artificially ſhew a bluſh of Indignation at the very name of Love in Publick, when he was aiming at the Corruption of the Child of the Family in private, and ſo made his publick vizor of *Madeſty* Pimp to his *private Vice*; a thing more than probable, moſt of our *Anti-Amoriſts* are too guilty of. Here again, ſays he, *Impoſture talks out of his Character, but a little* Amour *muſt be pull'd in by the head and ſhoulders, the better to edify the young Galants after*

Sermon.

Sermon. And what is it that has provok'd him. Why this as quoted by himſelf?

Ev'n to believe, and in their chiefeſt growth
They follow but my Grandſire Mahomet's
Divinity, who doth allow the good a handſome Girl
On Earth, the valiant two in Paradice.

L. When we ſee theſe *Saints* diveſted of all the other eminent failures of Humane Nature, we may perhaps be apt to believe that they are proof againſt Amours too, as he phraſes it; but when we obſerve none more ſet upon all the advantages of the world, none ſeeking more after what the young man in the *Goſpel* was bid ſell, and give to the Poor, we may have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect their ſincerity in their pretended averſion to theſe *filthy Amours.* And after all, it may be ſome, if not moſt of them are Enemies to it more for the ſake of their *Vices* than their *Virtues*; *Avarice* will not let them go to the expence of *Amours*, yet perhaps for good fellowſhip (as the *Jews* marry) they may engage

engage in their own tribe! a Pious Siſter may relieve the carnal neceſſities of a Brother; if the ſcandal be avoided the Crime is leſſen'd, and brought to the level of a *Saints Conſcience*; this I grant is an Argument of their *Prudence*, but not much of their Chaſtity.

F. But after all, is *Love* ſo heinous an offence as it ſeems to be made by theſe Gentlemen? Is there ſuch a neceſſary enmity betwixt *Man* and *Woman*, that 'tis worſe than all other Vices for them to Converſe, or Love one another? Thoſe who are moſt inclin'd to *Love* are moſt *tender* in their nature, moſt ſenſible of *Compaſſion*; and more eaſily mov'd to help and remove the diſtreſs of their unfortunate neighbour; and if they are guilty of ſins, they are yet ſins more of *frailty* than *malice*; and we find a St. *Mary Magdalen* in the Goſpel receiv'd into great favour, and an *Adultereſs* abſolv'd, but we find no *Uſurer* or *Rich man* that was ſincere in his application to the Doctrine of Life, at leaſt not ſo ſincere as theſe; for *Nicodemus* himſelf came but by night to hear our Saviour; and it was eaſier for a Camel to enter the Eye of a Needle,

than

than for a *rich man* to be ſav'd, that is, an Avaricious man.

F. I wou'd not juſtifie the *ſinful* part of *Love*, 'tis what in common prudence ought to be avoided; for 'tis a ſin againſt ourſelves, and generally an Injury to our neighbour, but theſe ſort of *Amours* are never repreſented on the *Stage*, but to ſhew the *inquietudes*, the *diſappointments*, the *fatigues* and *unhappy Concluſions* of them by lively *examples*, which will influence any one of ſenſe to avoid the Rocks and Quick-Sands, on which they ſee others Shipwrack'd. And ſince theſe things are every days practice all over the world, ſince there are *deſigning Jilts*, *cunning wheadling Pimps*, *and Bawds*, *ſluttering Beaux*, *Sharpers*, *falſe Coquets*, &c. that make it their buſineſs to ruine young men, and young women, that have not bought Wit yet by their own Experience, yet 'tis abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhou'd be diſcovered, and ſhewn to *all*, that all may know how to avoid them; for we have an *Engliſh* Proverb, *Fore-warn'd*, *fore-arm'd*; 'tis a ſort of *Anti-chriſtian barbarity* to deny poor heedleſs unguarded youth ſo timely a warning. Oh but, ſay you, the *Pulpit* will give this

this warning mnch better, and with leſs danger. That is evidently falſe, for firſt the *Pulpit* barely tells you that there are ſuch things, and that they are to be avoided, but leaves you yet in the dark *what* they are; the Pulpit gives you no marks to know 'em by; it tells you there are ſuch *Vices*, but gives you no view of the *vicious*, nor how ſubtly they diſguiſe themſelves in borrow'd ſhapes of Virtue, to do the more miſchief, while the *Stage* draws you the Picture to the life, gives you ſo many *Characteriſtic* marks, by ſhewing their *practice* and their deceits, their Hypocriſies, and gaudy outſides, that one muſt be very blind indeed, that is not inſtructed to know 'em where-ever they are ſeen; the *Stage* expoſing their Tricks teaches to avoid their Impoſition; for 'tis impoſſible to eſcape them without ſo perfect a *deſcription* of their *rogueries*. The view of the *Harlots falſe Careſſes*, *pretended Love*, and *deceitful Fears*, will make any young man leſs credulous in the peſts of youth; and this I think ſo great a ſervice to the public (till they are all rooted out of Cities, which never yet was, or will be) that were it

for

for this alone, the *Stage* merits much more encouragement than it has met with. But then for *lawful Love*, I hope our Brace of Reformers will not think, or pretend to condemn the *Stage* for giving examples of *Conjugal Love*. That is a Doctrine that can't be so much inculcated, and here I fancy Mr *Collier* will joyn with me, for he is interested in the matter, and Interest is a prevailing Argument with some men.

F. But *Love* in general I take to be a *Noble* Subject. Nature has fixt in all Mankind a perpetual, and universal inclination to it, for the propagation of their kind; and to lessen and vilify the *Sacred* source of *all* the world, is a sort of *Blasphemy*, more Criminal than any can be fixt on the *Stage*. 'Tis true, too many pursue not the right methods of this Love, but that is no argument against the *thing*, or any motive for deterring the *young* and the *fair* from the thoughts of what *Peoples* and *Civilizes* all Nations; and nothing but the source of Malice and Hell, can insinuate such ill natur'd Principles, as those some men advance against *Love*, which both by *Pecept* and *Pxample* is commanded,

manded, and recommended in the holy Scriptures.

L. I muſt own, I think there can be no more engaging and pleaſing Object in the world, than the Poets draught of a good Wife. *Belvidera*, and *Monimia*, *Meleſinda*, *Portia*, &c. are what all men would deſire; they give ſo taking a Beauty to a Woman, that all the ſenſible of the Sex muſt be in Love with it. And on Conjugal Love the happineſs and being of Families and Nations depend, therefore the *Poet* here too is *highly meritorious*. But you ſay this is ſufficiently recommended by the *Pulpit*; I grant 'tis recommended, but a bare Precept is leſs touching than *Example*. The *Pulpit* gives the *Rule*, the *Stage* the *Example*. This explains that, by this you ſee what that recommends; and by ſeeing the Charms of the *Example*, you are ſtruck with the *Beauty* of the *Precept*; ſo that here again the *Stage* diſcovers a *Merit* that challenges the *publick protection*, ſince the *Cement* and *Intereſt* of all *Families* are *advanced* by it.

F. But if in the good women the *Stage* is ſerviceable to the welfare of Fa-

Families, in the bad they pretend it teaches the *Corruption* of *them*.

L. Quite contrary——the intrigues of ill Wives are expos'd to ſhew (and they do plainly and obviouſly ſhew to the meaneſt capacity) both the *folly* and *ruin* of ſuch Women, the falſhood of their *Galants*, the neglect of their Families, and the *Contempt* they bring themſelves to, even with the men they unlawfully favour. It farther ſhews how the *Husband* ought to regard his *Wife*, by ſeeing the ſteps that lead her to ceaſe loving him. Ought not a Husband of Sir *John Brute*'s humour to reflect on the provocation he gives his *Wife*? and ſo in other Characters. If an old man, with one Foot in the Grave, will be for marrying a young Girl of Fifteen, it ſhews him the *unequality* and inconveniency of the match; and what temptations he expoſes her to, what Conduct he ought to obſerve in ſuch caſes, either to return his Wifes Love, or prevent, if poſſible, her falling. Now even here again the Poet has no common merit; for do we not ſee daily what injuſtice there is done to Families by the dotage of old Fellows,

who

who are lewd in their minds beyond the capacity of their body. How many Families have ſuffer'd by bringing in a young Mother-in-law into them? Who are ty'd by no obligation of pleaſure to the *love* of either *Husband* or *Children*, but has her own private Intereſt to carry on, and her own private Pleaſure to gratify, at the expence of that Families Honour and Intereſt, in which ſhe is grafted? This is daily experienc'd, and a perpetual grievance, and therefore worthy the Correction of the *Poet*, who hunts vice and folly through all their various forms, chaſes them from all their covers, follows them through all their doubles, to procure as much as poſſible, and conſiſtent with the depravity of our *Natures*, the *happineſs of Mankind*. It wou'd require a Volume to inſtance in all the particulars, in which the *Poets* are beneficial to the world in their *Theatrical Repreſentations*; where they preſent a glaſs, a mirrour of of *Truth*, to ſee their *Deformities* in, as well as *Beauty*; they ſhew the world as it is, that you may know how to direct your ſelf in all ſtates; for if it

were not drawn as it is, it could be of no uſe, nor cou'd any true meaſures of Conduct be taken from it.

F. But ſay the Enemies of the Stage, *what inſtances can you give of the good the Stage has done*? What Converts has it made from Vice and Folly by all its pictures? nay, on the contrary, you find they charge it with corrupting the *Morals* of the Age and Nation where it is permitted.

L. This is an unfair demand; for conſidering the multiplicity of *Pulpits*, and the fewneſs of *Theatres*, perhaps we may demand examples of all them in vain; I wou'd not be miſunderſtood, I know that the Converſion to Chriſtianity of all this part of the world is owing to the *Pulpit*, but that is not the Query; the Stage does not preſume to ſtand in Competition with the *Pulpit*, in that peculiar and ſacred advantage of teaching the *Myſtery* of *Faith*, but only pretends to be ſubſervient to it in the other arm of the *Pulpit*'s duty, the *Improvement and Regulation of our Manners*. And therefore ſince the Pulpits, as numerous as they are, are not over-ſtockt with extraordinary inſtances of their Con-

Converts in *matters of Morality*, ſo 'tis not to be expected the Stage ſhou'd give particular inſtances of the good it has done, becauſe thoſe things which it reforms, are of a nature that men are not very fond of owning themſelves guilty of, when once they have quitted them. Vice and Folly are what no man is fond of owning, in the time of tranſgreſſion, much leſs when he has forſaken his Errors: nor has it ever been requir'd from the hearers of the *Stage* Doctrine, that they ſhould declare their Converſion publickly: it has been thought enough that the methods the *Poets* take, are in themſelves ſufficient to refine the *Morals of the Age*, and muſt of Conſequence have affect on thoſe that are not *infatuated*, and incapable of Correction. But if it has fail'd of ſucceſs (which I deny) it is no more an Argument againſt the uſefulneſs of the *Stage*, than againſt the *Pulpit*, ſince ſo many thouſand Sermons have been ineffectual; there are not above 12 or 13 hundred Plays in our Tongue, and not one third part of them read, or in uſe, and there are ten thouſand Sermons preach'd in a week, ſo that the diſ-

proportion is enough to justify the Arguments against the *Pulpit*, if it be allow'd against the *Stage*, but indeed 'tis so foolish and trifling a thing, that 'tis not worth speaking of; if a visible and undoubted light be held out in a dark night, and some men rather choose to stumble on in the dark, through Alleys and by-ways, is it the fault of the light or the people? and after all, if it were permitted me to name names, I could give you not a few instances of my own knowledge of the advantages that have been reap'd from the Stage.

F. I must confess when I see the mad Zeal and proud Anger of the blind Zealots against the Stage, I am wholly at a loss how to justify either the Authors orReaders: but that all things are carry'd in a vogue and humour, and are run down, and are cry'd up in extremities, 'tis the fate of Books, of Men, of Doctrine. The System of *Ptolomy* was receiv'd and made a Sacred Canon of Astronomy, and *Copernicus*, with all the difficulty in the world, and under all the abusive ill names their Adversaries cou'd invent, made Evidence and *Truth* at last prevail, and we now wonder it met with any opposition: 'tis so in men of Wit

Boi-

Boileau gives us Inſtances of Authors, that by their intereſt, or humour of the people, have for a while run away with the eſteem of the world, and yet the violent aſſertors of their excellence in a certain Circle of time have caſt down their darlings, and let them lye in an indelible *Infamy*. There was a party that with all the extremity in the world rnn down Sir *Richard Blackmore's* Poem, and there was a party that run it up with no leſs violence and extremity on the other hand, and only time will ſhew which was in the right, if either was. Thus there is a party, that in ſpight of *Truth*, *Judgment*, and *good Senſe*, cry up Mr *Collier's* Book, and run down one of the beſt Anſwers to it, which in one leaf has more true ſenſe in it than in all the Viewer's Book; but time will evidently ſhew how falſely the one is extoll'd, and the other depreſs'd; *Truth* and *Excellence* will prevail, and paſſion and party will remit of their fooliſh Ardors. Then the Town will reflect, as we have done, of the real and undoubted uſe of the *Stage*, and agree that Mr *Collier* had better have ſhewn more *candour* and *honeſty*,

and not preferr'd 50 *l.* and buffoonry, to good ſenſe and *honeſty*; and he himſelf perhaps repent the raiſing that *Blaſphemous Fiend R——th* to throw dirt and *ordurous* Malice on the Memory of a Prince that Mr *Collier* pretends ſo great a veneration for: and when he remembers that Biſhop *Laud*, and King *Charles* the Firſt ſo earneſtly and *publickly* declar'd for the *Stage*, he will accuſe himſelf of little leſs than Arrogance and Folly, in undermining the heads of his Church, and the moſt *zealous* aſſertors of the doctrines he pretends to eſpouſe.

L. Then we may hope to ſee him fonder of *Truth* than a falſe Applauſe; and own that he has more Paſſion than Juſtice in his *Short View*; that the Ladies of our *Drama* have not left their *Modeſty* becauſe they differ from the *Dames* of Antiquity of a warmer Clime. Then we may expect he will give the Dramatic Poet his due praiſe, and confeſs, that while the *Pulpit* took our *ſerious hours* to inculcate its Doctrines, the Poet made a farther Conqueſt, and invaded even our hours of pleaſure, and turn'd the opportunity of *Vice* to the

the ſervice of *Virtue*; convey'd us *uſeful* precepts and *examples* in the midſt of our diverſion, and ſo improv'd our graver hours to the beſt advantage. St *Paul* ſays *pray always*, but that is not to be ſuppos'd a command of wordy Prayers, which our Saviour ſeems to condemn, but that all our actions ſhou'd be directed to a good end.

F. But you find Mr *R*———*th* tells you that our life is to be a life *of Sorrow*, that Pleaſure has nothing to do with us, and that St *James* was miſtaken when he tells us, *if any one be afflicted let him pray; and if any one be merry let him ſing Pſalms*, v. 13. How be merry? Why has St *James* forgot that whilſt Birds and Beaſts friſk and flutter in their gaudy furs *and feathers, we poor Mortals are call'd to mourning, repentance, and humiliation; a ſort of Doctrine the* Stage *and St* James *will have nothing to do with*—Nay, ſing Pſalms too? What mingle the word of God with *Prophane Mirth*? turn the *Scripture* into *diverſion*? Is not this to turn hereafter into Ridicule, and make the world think, that what is ſerviceable to any mirth, can never have weighty Importance e-

nough to engage our ſerious thoughts.

L. What different Notions St. *James* the *Apoſtle*, and Mr *R——th* the *Newsmonger*, and Mr *Collier* have of the ſame things; who is in the right I muſt leave to the Judgment of the world, for in oppoſition to Mr *Collier* I ſcarce dare take part with the Apoſtle. From the words of St *James* two things are evident, that *diverſion* and *Mirth* were *lawful* in the pureſt ſtate of *humiliation* and *repentance*; and next that the *Scriptures* themſelves are, without offence, to be us'd for our *diverſion*. The Scripture has two things to teach us, the *Myſtery* of Faith, and the *Doctrines of Morality*, and where the Stage carries on the ſame deſign, it can be no prophanity to make uſe of *Scripture Inſtances*, and *Hiſtories*, ſince the *Pſalms* themſelves are allow'd for the entertainment of our *Mirth*.

F. But the *Stage*, ye ſee, is among the *Pomps* and *Vanities* renounc'd in our *Baptiſm*.

L. Doctors differ, and one Swallow makes no Summer; one Fathers opinion about the *Antient Stage* has little in reality of weight againſt *ours*, and that the

gay

gay dreſſes of the *Stage* are the Vanities renounc'd, I wou'd know whether it be becauſe they are generally *Tinſel* and *Shew*, and not *really* ſo rich as they appear, or becauſe all manner of finery is renounc'd? if the laſt, then *Princes*, *Lords*, *Ladies*, *&c.* muſt all put off their gay habiliments, their Jewels muſt be thrown away, what's Clean and Comely is ſufficient. Away with your *Ribbond-weavers*, *Milliners*, *Commode-women*; not for the cauſe commonly objected againſt them, of carrying *billet deux*, and giving opportune meetings to Ladies and their Gallants, but for making high *toppings*, *ſtiffning Ribbands with Wire*, *&c.* Nay, away with *Mercers*, *Perukemakers*, *Goldſmiths*, and *Cabinetmakers*, *Japanners*, *Painters*, *&c.* Blow up the *Eaſt-India* Companies at once, both *old and new*, they bring us to the Pomps and Vanities renounc'd in our *Baptiſm*, away with them they Corrupt the *Morals* of the *Age*, diſguis'd in their Commodities the *Ladies* attempt the charming of the *Men*, the *Beaux* the ruin of the Ladies, and the captivating the hearts of the *City Wives*. The Beaux, cry you mercy, they are part of the Vanities re-

renounc'd in our *Baptiſm.* I wiſh Mr *R——th* were to go and inculcate this *Doctrine* among the *Seamen*, *Ribbond-Weavers*, *Lace-makers*, &c. Doubtleſs he might be a Martyr too, tho his Life and Converſation do not promiſe any ſuch matter. If dreſs and theſe pomps be lawful in reality, nay, abſolutely neceſſary, for the keeping and employing the major part of Mankind, why may not the Players repreſent great perſons. Dreſs ſomething like 'em? 'tis not the Dreſs but the Heart that the Goſpel looks on. Pride in rags is a ſin, while Humility in magnificence is a Virtue. *Diogenes* was inſolently proud in his contempt of pomp, and *Ariſtotle* ſet not his heart on what he us'd, only in conſideration of the ſtate he was in. The neceſſaries of life would not employ the third part of the world; for all that we find is now furniſhed by a ſmall part of men. Take away what is call'd the pomps and vanities of the world, and Virtue, Induſtry, and almoſt every Action of man would be no more. But only like Brute Beaſts, we ſhould meerly care for eating and drinking. Theſe are the fooliſh extra-

va-

vagances, theſe hot-ſpurs run into, when they write not for truth, but faction and little intereſts.

F. There is no doubt to be made, but that an induſtrious man of any moderate ſhare of brains may bring *Fathers* and *Scriptures* too for a thouſand *Abſurdities* and *Falſities*. This is as evident as daily experience can make it. The Controverſies betwixt the Church of *Rome* and *England*, betwixt the Church of *England* and *Diſſenters*, betwixt the *Congregational* and *Presbyterian Divines*, betwixt the *Anabaptiſts* and their *Oppoſers*; and ſo on to all the *diviſions*, and ſub-diviſions of opinions, that this Town alone affords us. Which has render'd our Common *Chriſtianity* ſo obſcure, that if we deny our *Reaſon* to be Judge of the Controverſie, and tell us when the *Fathers* ſpeak right, when the *ſeveral ſides* give the true ſenſe of *Scripture*, we muſt perpetually wander in the dark, and fall into the unhappy and deplorable ſtate of *Scepticiſm*. For this reaſon I think 'tis *very* fooliſh for this Author to inſiſt on two or three expreſſions of the *Fathers* about the Theatres being the *Pomps* and *Vanities* renounc'd

nounc'd by us in our *Baptiſm*; and moſt of the other Charges brought againſt the *Stage*.

L. The reaſon of theſe expreſſions have been ſo often given both by us, and all that have writ in defence of the *Stage*, that it wou'd be impertinent to repeat them, ſince from all that has been ſaid 'tis evident, that there is no Parallel betwixt our *Modern*, and the *Roman Stage*: And by this fellow 'tis confeſs'd hereafter, that the *Fathers* have writ againſt many things that are now univerſally thought innocent; and if their *vehemence* againſt thoſe things were as great as againſt this, I know no reaſon that they ſhou'd be regarded more in this than in thoſe.

F. But you find he ſays the difference is, that here their Authority is back'd by the holy *Scriptures*.

L. So were the others, if the quoting a *Text* be *backing* their Authorities; for thoſe *Fathers* that writ againſt the *Antipodes*, proceeded to actual violence, and built their opinions on ſeveral *Texts* of *Scripture*, as the oppoſers of *Copernicus* will ſhew in all their trifling Books; and yet *Gallilæus* and *Gaſſendus* in their de-

defence of that *Syſtem* have evidently confuted their opinions; and Experience has evidently prov'd, that the *Scripture* was not to be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe the *Fathers* or the Modern *Ptolomiſts* wou'd have it, there being nothing now more certain, than the Orbicular form of the Earth, and by conſequence that there are *Antipodes*, tho the hot zeal of ſome of the *Fathers* of the fourth Century caus'd thoſe to be excommunicated, and uſed like Hereticks, that advanced this Truth; which is enough to ſhew, that we can build no Authority on the *Fathers*, where reaſon is againſt them. They were but *Men*, and ſome of them ſubject to great and unpardonable Heats; inſomuch that they have been tranſported to what wou'd not be forgiven a *Modern Divine*. To make an end therefore of this Chapter, which has held us too long, ſince we have ſeen that it is evident that Plays are conducing to the inſtruction of mankind, on eaſier terms than Experience; that their buſineſs, by the Confeſſion of their Enemies, is to puniſh Vice, and reward *Virtue*; ſince they turn our hours of relaxation and diver-

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ſion from the purſuit of *Drunkenneſs*, *Idle diſcourſe*, and other *follies* of yet more dangerous conſequence, to our peace of *Mind*, and Preſervation of our *Eſtates*, to the Leſſons of *Morality*; and finally, ſince from St *James* 'tis evident that *Mirth* is lawful, I think there can be no reaſon to charge King *Charles* the *Martyr*, and the Governing part of the *Church of England* with any breach of duty in exhibiting thoſe entertainments on the *Lords day* after all Divine Service was over; ſince it only purſu'd the buſineſs of the day in promoting *Morality*; when without them men wou'd retire to the Tavern, and perhaps to more criminal occaſions.

F. You have forgot one point of the deciſion, that is, the Profaneneſs of the Theatre.

L. I defer that till our next meeting, becauſe I have ſome Papers which I wou'd read over before I deliver my Judgment in that particular.

F. Then we may now remove to the next Chapter.

An Anſwer to the Material part of the reſt of this Scurrilous Book.

F. I Begin to be as tired with this Author as with an old poring Antiquary, with his tedious lectures on ruſt-eaten Medals.

L. Nay, thò that be a folly trifling enough, yet 'tis *harmleſs*; but this, beſides the maſs of Folly and *Impudence*, has ſo nauſeous a portion of rank Malice, that the very ſcandal which has help'd ſome Books off, and ſome Men to *Reputation*, is ſo *fulſomely prepar'd*, that it turns the Stomach, and we are fain to do with it, as with ſome waters, hold our noſes while we drink, for fear the ſtench ſhou'd ſtrike us down.

F. And that without hope of any benefit from ſo *nauſeous a draught*. Therefore for Gods ſake diſpatch the reſt of him, with a little more ſpeed; for to dwell too long upon his Abſurdities is ſuperfluous: Since they are ſo obvious

obvious to every Juſt Reader. *All* therefore that he ſays in his next Chapter may be reduc'd to this, that he accuſes King *Charles* the firſt and *Archbiſhop Land* of Commanding *Sports* and *Paſtimes* to be allow'd the people on *Sundays* in the evening after Divine Service was over. As for his account of Mr *Prynn*'s *Proſecution* and Suffering, 'tis not the buſineſs of this place, and requires our conſulting Hiſtories, that are not at hand. But I do not queſtion but he has had a *fair Tryal*; and the only juſt fault that cou'd be found, is, I am apt think, that he was not ſent to *Bedlam*, inſtead of the *Tower*.

L. Our Author owns the Declaration for Sports was read by the *Miniſters*, and impos'd by the *Biſhops*; ſo that if it were a fault, he brings a *great*, *good* and *learned Body* into the *Guilt*; which 'tis not probable they wou'd ſubmit to, and therefore 'tis much more reaſonable to conclude, that they were ſatisfy'd in the *Innocence* of the matter, which indeed the Declaration of King *James* the Firſt makes ſufficiently evident, in allowing only *lawful recreation*; and that to avoid much greater inconveniencies,

as the going to *filthy tippling* and *drinking*, which occaſions drunkenneſs, quarrels, and ſpending their little ſubſtance that ſhou'd maintain their families. And let our Scribbler ſay what he pleaſes, when he or any man Argues *matter of fact*, if he were a much finer, and more ſubtle diſputant than he is, he is to be ſlighted. To contend that there is no ſuch thing as *motion*, requires that we only *riſe* and *walk*, or indeed only ſpeak to confute the *babbler*; ſo to prove that *drinking* is the practice of all Countries and Towns after Sermon, every mans own knowledge may ſuffice. Nay, the very Saints themſelves (I mean our *Hypocritical Preciſians*) find ſome other entertainments on the *Sabbath* beſides *Prayer* and *Preaching*; and there are other Books beſides the *Practice* of *Piety*, the *Pilgrims Progreſs*, that will go down in private.

F. Pho—this is to run into his fault of charging things on *Suppoſition*, of which yon can give no proof.

L. Yet my Charge is ſomething Modeſter than his, both as to the *thing* and to the *perſons*; *I ſpeak not evil of dignities*, for that is poſitively forbid by

the holy *Scripture*; and tho 'tis true that the Accuſation I bring againſt theſe *Saints* are of a nature that admit of no other *proof*, than what every man muſt find by his own Acquaintance with them, yet if we may judge of their ſpending the *Sabbath*, by their ſpending the reſt of the week, they have no reaſon to ſay with the *Phariſee* of old, *I thank God I am not like other men*; for *Intereſt*, *worldly Intereſt*, which they call *Induſtry*, is as much their care all the week, as any of their neighbours of leſs *Religious outſides*; *Avarice* is a remarkable advantage of theſe *Sabbath Idolaters*, and thoſe that deny the poorer ſort that *harmleſs Recreation* after Evening Prayer, who are oblig'd by their neceſſities to work all the week hard, are not very ſingular in compaſſionating their neceſſities, *even* on *Munday*, when the Sermons they have been fixing in their Souls all the day before, ſhou'd not, one wou'd think, be *wholly forgot*.

F. Perhaps 'tis with them as with thoſe that eat too much of one food on that day to reliſh it all the week after.

L. I have heard a ſtory of a *Dutch Miniſter*, who was accus'd to the Magiſtrate for Preaching always the ſame Sermon for ten years together; but demanding his accuſers to be brought face to face to him, he began to queſtion them what they remember'd of that Sermon, and on their being not able to give any account of it, appeal'd to the Magiſtrate to juſtifie his conduct; For ſaid he, if in ten years they have been able to learn ſo little of *one* Sermon, what wou'd they *profit by many?* The *Parſon* was diſcharg'd, and Congregation check'd.

F. Well! and what of this?

L. So it may be our *Saints* are of a more dull and ſlow apprehenſion of Divine Inſtructions; like thoſe *Dutch Boors*, than their neighbours, who with leſs application can carry away *Morality* enough, and ſound Religion, to ſhew their *Faith* by their Works all the week after; and ſo make every day, as well as *Sunday*, the day of the *Lord*; and to put the *Moral Laws* of the *Goſpel* in practice, as well as thoſe of *Faith*, and which in *Reality* are inſeparable, if we believe *Truth* itſelf in the *Goſpel*.

F. In ſhort, our Author accuſes King *Charles* for not permitting his loving Subjects to be moleſted in their *Lawful Recreations*, which, by the advice of his Judges, as learn'd in the Law as Mr *Prynn* and Mr *R——th*, he has diſtinguiſh'd into *Dancing*, *Archery*, *Leaping*, *Vaulting*, *May-games*, *Whitſon-ales*, *Morrice-dancing*, *May-poles*, &c. moſt of which only exerciſe the body, and recreate the mind; and yet after this quotation he flies into his exclamations, offers the *Platonick Ring*! the *head of the Church*! Well, and why not? what is here that leſſens him in any of theſe Characters? is the dancing of Men and Women on Country Greens, and in publick too, ſuch a crime and offence to Modeſty? what muſt not man and woman meet? muſt they not converſe, muſt there be no Society 'twixt 'em? what does the ridiculous Enthuſiaſt mean? will he be content that *every Text of Scripture* ſhall be run to the extremity of the Letter? I dare believe he'll beg my excuſe. *Sell all and give it to the poor, if any man take thy Cloak give him thy Coat alſo*, be your Converſation *yea, yea, nay, nay*; *ſwear not at all*; and many

many *other Texts which St* Collier *and St* R——th *find* evaſions enough from to ſave their *Pelf*, and reject *the Prayers of their diſtreſſed Fellow Creatures:* and therefore we may reaſonably conclude, the *Pharaſaical* obſervation of the *Sabbath* is not ſo juſtifyable by the *Holy Writ*, ſince beſides the Reaſon of the thing our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, has reprimanded ſome of Mr *R——th*'s Kidney in this particular. The Doctrine of the Goſpel is not to deprive Mankind of the benefits of Society, without which human kind cannot ſubſiſt, but to procure it greater advantages and innocent pleaſures, that injure none, when the duty of the day is over, can be no offence either to practice or to encourage; ſo that all this buſtle againſt the King and the Church of *England*, for thoſe *permiſſions are as fooliſhly malicious as groundleſs*, and can only mean, that he would have only the rich alone have Recreation, or that there ſhould be no *Recreation* at all. The firſt is *Villainous*, the latter *Ridiculous*, and contrary to the practice of all *Mankind*, from our Saviour down to this moment.

L. But he has not done with the Church yet, for he is for falling on that Root and Branch, as well as the *Stage*; for the next Chapter is againſt the *Schools*: ſo that to ſhew the corruptneſs of our conſtitution, he is reſolved to allow the poor Church of *England* no part ſound, and by conſequence render it as infamous, as his little Abilities and his great Aſſurance can. He charges them with corrupting the *Morals* of the *Age* in all States, and to lay the foundation of it in youth itſelf: but here, as in other places, his Reaſons are frivolous, and his quotations nothing to the purpoſe; and the whole Chapter itſelf being wholly foreign to the Queſtion in hand, I ſhall paſs it over with this reflection alone, *That the only ground and deſign of it is, a malicious and impious piece of ſcandal thrown on both Church and Government, which he takes care himſelf to comfirm in the laſt Paragraph. That a Reform of the Schools in this point has been ſo long neglected, reflects* ſhame *upon the* Church, *who* ought *chiefly to have concern'd themſelves in it,* &c. *and therefore the* Univerſities, *who*

tho

tho they formerly condemn'd the Stage, *are now become its* Admirers, *and to the* ſcandal *of the Nation*, Obſcene Poems *are writ at their* Publick Acts.

I hope the Univerſities will take care this Gentleman may have his due reward for ſo *Impudent* a falſity without any *ſhadow* of Proof.

F. Alas if he were to anſwer for all the *Scandal* he has produced without the leaſt Proof, the *Poor man* would be in a deſperate Condition, and bear his *Predeceſſour* Company in the next *Stage Condemners* Account of the loſs of both his Ears: but to proceed. He is now come to anſwer the defender of the *Stage*; here ſure we ſhall find ſome *touches*, ſome attempt at *reaſoning*.

L. Attempt! I aſſure you at firſt Daſh he brings his dead-doing *Syllogiſm*, which by his aſſurance he takes for *Unanſwerable*; but before we come to ſhew the *Abſurdity* of that, I have a word or two to ſay to what he premiſes in malicious inſinuations againſt the *Divine* of the *Church* of *England* for tranſlating *Father Caffaro*, Divinity Profeſſor at *Paris*, in defence of the *Stage*. Read the ſecond Paragraph.

F. reads, *Before I come directly to the Point*, which he has never done yet, or intends to do at all) *it may not be Improper to observe, that considering the Palpable influence the Stage has had upon the Corruption of Manners so much complained of, it seems no very suitable Imployment for one Divine of the Church of* England, *to espouse the defence of the* Stage *against another. Nor is it very much for the defendants honour to make use of Arrows from a Popish* Quiver; *for we have no reason to think that a* Popish Divine *will be a Cordial Enemy to the* Stage, *when the worship of their Church do's so much resemble the Pomp of the Theatre.*

L. I desired you to read that Paragraph over, that you might see what he thinks not *Improper*, that is to Catch at every opportunity of abusing the *Church* of *England*, or any Member of the Clergy, since there is no such Evidence, as he and some pretend, without any *Proof* or *True* reason of the *Stages Palpable Influence* on the Corruption of Manners; but on the contrary, that the end and aim of the *Stage*, is, as Mr *Collier* confesses, the

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encouragement of *Virtue*, and *diſcouragement* of *Vice*; and ſince, as Dr *Horneck* and Mr *Weſtly* too owns, *Moral Repreſentations* are *uſeful* for that end, I can ſee no reaſon why the defence of it ſhou'd be an improper employment for a Divine of the Church: Nor can I ſee why it ſhou'd be more for this Divines diſhonour to make uſe of Popiſh *Arrows* for, than Mr *Collier* to uſe them againſt the *Stage*; at leaſt Mr *R*——*th* ſhou'd not think it ſo, ſince he has been beholding to the Papiſts for ſome Arrows himſelf: nay, he contradicts himſelf when he tells us, that we have no reaſon to think a *Popiſh Divine* will be in earneſt againſt the *Stage*, for in the next Chapter but one he brings more than one whole *Popiſh Council* againſt the *Stage*, and for the *baniſhment* of it. If the *Biſhop* of *Arras* (a violent and bigotted *Popiſh Biſhop*) may be allow'd an Authority againſt the *Stage*, why may not *Father Caffaro*, a Divinity Profeſſor, be an Authority for it? 'Tis but ſetting our Adverſaries to fight one againſt another: Tho the *Father* ſeems more *Juſtifiable* than the *Biſhop*, ſince he gives you better reaſon for what he has

has done, than our Syllogizer has been *able* to Anſwer.

F. He goes on with full as much Evidence as he begins; the Doctors firſt argument he ſays is--- that the *Scriptures have no expreſs and particular Precept againſt Plays*, which argument is in force, for all that he has ſaid againſt it; his fooliſh inſtance of *Mahomet* is *childiſhly ridiculous and notoriouſly falſe*; for we are fore-warn'd in both the old and new Teſtaments of falſe Prophets. But the caſe is not the ſame, nor is the conſequence of one and the other of any proportion. St *Paul* writ *then* of things in being, quotes Plays *then* in vogue; ſure he cou'd not be ignorant of the Ills of that ſort of Poetry if there were any in it, and yet when there was a fair opportunity to put ſo neceſſary advice in, he ſays nothing of the matter: *Mahomet* appear'd ſome hundreds of years after, and expreſsly againſt what the very end and deſign of the *Goſpel* was. But he may ſay, that cou'd not but be foreſeen by him that ſaw all things. *True*, nor cou'd the *Idolatry* and the pernicious evils of the *Stage* eſcape his foreſight; yet

yet he has never fore-warn'd us of the *Stage*, but againſt falſe Prophets more than once.

L. Nay, this Scribbler himſelf is pleas'd in his *uſual* mode of Contradiction to allow, that *Plays* lawfully may be, and have been writ by the *Fathers* themſelves; for (after a notorious falſhood) he owns in his 19th Chapter, that the writing *a Poem in the nature of a Tragedy, or Poetical Dialogue* (that is to ſay in *Sinners Engliſh* a Tragedy) with ſeveral acts and parts, to add *Life* and *Luſtre* to it, *no body is againſt, that* Apollinaris, and the *Primitive Proteſtants* have done it.

F. How? has *Apollinaris*, and the *Primitive Proteſtants* (and thoſe *good Chriſtians* too) faln under the laſh of his dead-doing *Syllogiſm?* has not God appointed *ſufficient means for the propagation of the Goſpel and Morality*, without the help of the *Stage? and is it not unlawful* for man to appoint other means to accomplish it. Did not our Saviour ſend his Apoſtles to preach, and teach both Jews and Gentiles? and muſt *Apollinaris* and our *good Primitive Chriſtians find another way of Comedies and Tragedies*

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to do it, which owe their inventions to the Devil, and which were founded by Drunkards, and in honor of Idols? Nay, to do it in Imitation of Euripides, *a Pagan Poet? and of* Menander *and* Pindarus, *a couple of hounds of the ſame infernal Kennel?* "*Are we not infinitely better* "*provided for thoſe ends, by the word of* "God, *and the Ordinance, the Mini-* "*ſtry? are not we taught that the former* "*is able to make us wiſe unto Salvation:* "*is given us by inſpiration of, for Do-* "*ctrine, Reproof, Correction, and Inſtru-* "*ction in Righteouſneſs, that we may be* "*perfect, and truly furniſh'd unto all good* "*works,* 2 Tim. 2. *ſo that we have no* "*need of the Inſtruction of the Stage for* "*any of thoſe ends* ——

L. Hold, hold; do you not know when this Gentleman is in the humour he will allow *all* things *lawful* but the *Action?* Plays may be *writ*, but not *acted*; *Apollinaris* and the reſt may *write* what *Plays* they pleaſe; nay, tho it be for the *advancement* of *virtue*, and *puniſhment* of *vice*, which is St. *R*——*th*'s *Quarrel* to the *Drama*, as appears from this *Syllogiſm*, if they be not *acted.*

F. If

F. If to add *Life* and *Luſtre* to the thing, the Dialogue, the paſſions, nay, the *Pagan acts* and *parts* are *lawful*, why to add a greater *Life* and *Luſtre* may not *Action* be added?

L. Why? becauſe 'tis reaſonable—that's a ſufficient cauſe for St *R——th* to refuſe the *Action*; but of that hereafter: we have got this point in ſpite of his *Syllogiſm*, that *Plays* may be *writ*; *for that he ſays no body ever deny'd*; which deſtroys a great part of his Book, and all the buſtle on that topic. We are not defending the Corruption of the *Stage*, 'tis enough he will allow a Poem in the *nature* of a *Tragedy*; and that *good Chriſtians* too may *write Comedies* and *Tragedies*, without damnation; we ſhall, I doubt not, remove the difficulty of *acting* them hereafter, when we have done with his *Syllogiſm*.

F. Truly methinks that piece of Argument will hold againſt all private perſons, how qualify'd ſoever, *writing* any *Moral* Treatiſe; for if a private perſon may write a *Moral* Book againſt Vice, why may not a Poet exhort, and reprove his *backſliding Neighbour* in a *Play*, by ſo efficacious a means as the

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ſetting before his eyes the follies and vices of the times they live in, and alſo to ſhew the *misfortunes and evils* that attend them?

L. Though he allows the *Magiſtrates* in the number of the *Lawful Perſons* that may encourage Virtue, and *diſcountenance Vice*; yet he will not let him judge of what means to uſe to that end: *he* alone is to dictate to them, as he has already to the Church, what they are to do, or not to do, ſo that both *Church* and *State* are Mr *R--th*'s Deputies, who *deſpotically* preſcribes them the Laws of *Right* and *Wrong*, which they muſt not tranſgreſs without the penalty of his rebuke. And what Magiſtrate but will be aw'd by him, from allowing the promoting virtue by the Stage.

F. But why may not Magiſtrates permit *Plays* to purſue this end? ſince we find the Supream Magiſtrate have already often alloted the Theatre for this uſe both at home and abroad.

L. He gives no ſubſtantial Reaſon againſt it, but ſuch as he uſes to give you muſt be content with, if you take him for your Pay-maſter ——— The

Pulpit

Pulpit he ſays is ſufficient without any other help for this end: tho experience demonſtrates, that the *Pulpit* and *Stage* both have not been ſufficient to cure half the vices of the Age, or of a-any Age indeed.

F. I fear there have been *Pulpits*, which Mr *R*———*th* will allow have been farther from purſuing this end, than Mr *Collier* will have our *Stage* to be, unleſs he will grant that all the *Pulpits* of *Popery*, *Anabaptiſm*, *Socinianiſm*, &c. have been in the right for ſo many Centuries. And if *Hereſies*, *Rebellion*, and *Maſſacres*, have been taught from ſome *Pulpits*, I am ſure the *Pacific Doctrines* of the Goſpel were far from being delivered there. So that at his rate of Arguing, we are to adhere to whatever is told them from the *Pulpit*, which is to transfer the *infallibility* of St *Peter's Chair* to every *Pulpit*, or to make a *Tranſubſtantion* of *infallibility*. But on the contrary, if every private man is to be Judge of the Truth of the Doctrines of the *Pulpit*, then is every man Judge of the ſufficient means of teaching *Virtue*, and diſcouraging *Vice*; and if ſo, whom has Mr. *R*---*th*

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his Authority of depriving not only the Magiſtrate, but every private man of his Native Right from. He has not read Mr *Hales* of *Eaten*, he would find elſe, that in *True Chriſtianity* there is no ſuch very great preheminence of *Characters*, every Chriſtian is to be ſaved by his own Faith, and whatever means he uſes to promote the Doctrines of the Goſpel, he cannot juſtly fall under a rebuke.

L. Nay, I fancy his very Syllogiſm may be turned againſt the *very body of the Clergy themſelves*; for if the Scriptures be ſufficient to make us wiſe unto Salvation, there is no need of Teachers of ſo plain a Doctrine; and if the *Scriptnres* be ſufficient, then 'tis unlawful to uſe any other means. This will farther appear when we conſider that while we are entirely to ſeek what Pulpits to hear, our belief and practice muſt be ſuſpended. Mr *R———th* is not for hearing the Church of *England*, and in that Mr *Collier* agrees with him; now I am not for hearing that of theDiſſenter; one will not admit that of the *Lutherans*; another denies that of the *Papiſts*, and yet all will agree that the Scrip-

pture is the word of *God*, and is *ſufficient* to make us wiſe unto *Salvation*; this being evidently ſo, Mr *R——th*'s *Syllogiſm* at one blow makes all the *Pulpits* in the world as unlawful as the *Stage*, by the ſame conſequence.

F. But, paſſing this over——I ſuppoſe he will *allow* the Magiſtrate may preſcribe any particular *Recreation*. Nay, I ſuppoſe he will allow every private perſon to chuſe what *diverſion* he pleaſes, provided it be innocent. But 'tis evident from Hiſtory (to ſay nothing of *Athens* or *Rome*) that *Queen Elizabeth* did, tho ſhe ſuppreſs'd *Play-houſes* in the City, *protected* and *encourag'd* them in her Court: That King *Charles*, who was both a *Magiſtrate* and a *Pious man*, gave yet a greater *Authority* to the *Stage*; and that the *Governing* Part of the Clergy themſelves thought it worth their *favour* and *defence*; and tho on ſome extraordinary Occurrences or Abuſes there may be ſome Inſtances given of the ſuppreſſing of *particular Theatres*, yet both *Athens* and *Rome*, both Chriſtians and Pagans, have ſolemnly approv'd the *diverſion*; and that ſo many *thouſands of women of virtue and honour*,

men of *candour*, *wiſdom* and *virtue* have and do yet chuſe it for a Recreation, from more weighty affairs: And laſtly, he himſelf has own'd that no body *denies* the *writing a Poem in the nature of a Tragedy* to be *Lawful*, by conſequence the reading them can be no more a Crime; nay, as will hereafter appear, nor even the ſeeing them *acted*.

L. Yes, the *Magiſtrate* may appoint *meer* Recreation no doubt, but his fault wou'd be to ſingle out ſuch *pernicious* Recreations, that ſhou'd be any way *ſubſervient* to the *promotion of virtue*; *that* is not *lawful* for him to do: and ſince there are ways and means found out, and eſtabliſh'd for our more ſerious hours, and for the more ſedate and temperate ſort of people, he muſt not endeavour to turn even our *Diverſion* into *Inſtruction*, and with St *James*, make our very Mirth part of our *Devotion*. If Plays would be content with meerly diverting us, they might be allow'd by theſe *Saints* as well as the Bottle: but if they *ſaucily* pretend to give us uſeful Leſſons of Virtue rewarded, and Vice puniſh'd, of *folly* and *falſhood ridicul'd*, and *expos'd*, then perhaps Mr.

Mr *R——th* wou'd allow *Apolinaris*, *Du Pleſſis*, and *Buchanan*, and if good *Chriſtian Comedies* and Tragedies of the Proteſtants in *Henry* the 8th's time, as good *Authorities* for the *Stage* as *Tertullian*, *St Chryſoſtom*, and the reſt *againſt* it, for what has no relation to our *Stage*. 'Tis their propoſing *virtue and inſtruction* for their aim, that makes them *unlawful*, and a reflection on the *Wiſdom* and *Power* of God. Tho *Apollinaris* writ Comedies and Tragedies in imitation of *Euripides*, *Menander*, and *Pindarus*, on Divine Arguments and Scripture Stories, tho the good Chriſtian, in the beginning of the Reformation, propagated the *Proteſtant Doctrine* under the vail of Dialogues, by way of Comedy and Tragedy, inſomuch that the *Popiſh Clergy* got them forbid by the 34th and 35th of *Hen.* 8th, c. 1. tho the famous *du Pleſſis Mornay* writ a Tragedy of *Jeptha*'s Daughter, tho *Buchanan* did the like, yet the *Magiſtrates* muſt ſuppreſs the Plays, that are exalted from meer diverſions, to the promotion of virtue and diſcouragement of vice, for only that very *Numerical* Cauſe.

F. Hold a little, good Sir, here is ſomething again that falls under our *Syllogizers Anathema* —— *what the Doctrine of the Goſpel promoted by Comedies* and *Tragedies*? is not the Scripture ſufficient? is not the Ordinance of the *Miniſters* ſufficient without the *Stage*, or *Comedies and Tragedies*? did the *Apoſtles* promote the Goſpel ſo? was *Julian* more terrible than *Nero*, or was *Martyrdom* more to be avoided? where did *Apollinaris* learn to make uſe of *Foreign Diabolical* Arms to fight the Cauſe of *Truth*? when the Goſpel and God had furniſh'd his Cauſe with means ſufficient without them? *Apollinaris muſt either recant his Plays*, or declare his oppoſition to *Tertullian*, and St *Chryſoſtom and* Mr R—th—*did he ever declare his Repentance? without which there was ſcarce Salvation for him*, if we will believe Mr *R—th.*

L. Yet if we believe the ſame Mr *R—th*, it was lawful in *Apollinaris and in the good Chriſtians of the firſt Reformation*, to propagate even the *Doctrines of Faith*, (for we differ not from the *Papiſts* in the points of *Morality*) ſo that one would think it were not altogether

gether ſo *unlawful*, neither to make uſe of that help, for the promoting *Moral Virtue*, which he has granted for the promulgation of even the higheſt and pureſt points of *Religion*.

F. Did the *Stage* indeed advance Doctrines *Contrary* to thoſe of the *Pulpit*, there would be ſome ſeeming ground for this Indignation; when it does, or may at laſt enforce the very Doctrines, that the Pulpit ought to teach us, I cannot but wonder, that any one that has the leaſt pretence to virtue and honeſty, will act ſo *prepeſterouſly* againſt it, as to run out into all the indecent, and even *villainous* extravagances in nature; forge a thouſand falſe Crimes from their own guilty imaginations, and then charge them as real on the *Stage*.

L. This is evident, that whatever the abuſes of this *excellent Invention* may do, a well regulated *Stage* cannot but be ſubſervient to the *Pulpit*. I have already in ſome meaſure ſhewn, that the *Stage* teaches us by Examples, what the *Pulpit* does only by Precept. And I may, I hope, without offence ſay, that tho the ſententious *Truths*

in *Eccleſiaſtes* are admirable, and touching to thoſe, that have *experienc'd* the verity of them; yet, that when any one of them is illuſtrated by an *example* repreſented to the *life*, it is ſtill more touching, and muſt make the greater impreſſion in the mind, eſpecially of thoſe, whoſe Age or happy Fortune has ſecur'd them from a *perſonal experience.*

F. But does not *Pharoah* (ſays he) and the other Perſecutors of Gods people afford us examples in the Scripture?

L. I grant them *admirable examples*, yet from his own Confeſſion a *Poem in the Nature of a Tragedy, with ſeveral* Acts *and* Parts *to give life and luſtre to it*, &c. is *lawful*, and therefore from his own inſtances of *Jeptha*, *Baptiſtes*, &c. the Poet may without a Crime exalt it from a bare narration, into the *Action* of a *Tragedy*, with the natural paſſion that we find in our ſelves on the like Occaſions; this *Apollinaris*, *Nazianzen*, *du Pleſſis Mornday*, and our *Primitive Proteſtants*, evidently concluded from their practice, which even our *Scribbler* juſtifies, and grants to be ſo

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lawful, as never to have been deny'd by any body, and yet by his own furious *Sylogiſm*, theſe *very numerical* good Chriſtians are guilty of the moſt *heinous* and damnable Crimes in bringing in a *new* means to that end, for the accompliſhing of which, God had appointed a *ſufficient means* before.

F. But you find that he pretends that *Apollinaris* did this when he was deny'd preaching by *Julian* the Apoſtate.

L. But was there more liberty of preaching under *Tiberius*, *Nero*, *Dioclesian*, &c. could not the Chriſtians as well have read the ſtories as they lay in the *Scriptures* themſelves, as in the *Tragedy* of *Apollinaris*, as our Author terms them? had not God provided ſufficient means for this by the ordinance of the Miniſtry? Nay, in chooſing *Scripture* ſtories it ſhew'd as if they more immediately doubted the *ſufficiency* of the means that God had taken, ſince that was to imply at leaſt, that the word of God admitted of an Improvement by *Poems in the nature of Tragedies*. Nay, the Tragedy of the *paſſion* of our *Bleſſed Saviour* writ by

St *Gregory Nazianzen*, is the higheſt ſtroak that cou'd be offer'd at Mr *R--th's Syllogiſm*. What, had not God ordain'd *ſufficient* means of conveying the Knowledge and efficacy of his *Miraculous* death and paſſion, by which all Mankind were reſcu'd from the graſp of *Satan* and the *Jaws of Death*, without this *Father's* bringing it into a *Play*, a *Theatrical Repreſentation*? Is not this to fly in the face of the God of our Salvation? and did it not call down the Judgment of the moſt-high, on ſo blaſphemous and abominable an undertaking? This would have been Mr *Collier's* exclamation againſt any of our Modern Poets that ſhould have done this, and the *News-monger* would have attackt him with his *Syllogiſm* of the *ſufficiency* of the means already provided. But our Poets are cautious of meddling with that, to which 'tis a Crime to add, and no leſs to diminiſh, to give corroborating Inſtances of Gods Judgments, in the puniſhment of Vice in ſtories, that are more liable to be manag'd by their Will and Judgment.

F. But the *Plays* of *Nazianzen*, *Apollinaris*, &c. were not Acted; had no prophane *Geſtures* and *Geſticulations*, nor pomp of the Theatre to ſet them off, for there you find lyes the Crime of Plays, in this Gentlemans opinion. Plays may be *writ* but not *acted*.

L. Without doubt he has his *weighty* reaſons to himſelf, for that and all things he has advanc'd; which he keeps as a Reſerve, and will not let us now ſee them. But I think if it be lawful to add the embelliſhments of the Poetical part of the *Stage*, the mechanic part cannot contain any greater *prophanation*; the pomp of the Theatre is ſtill paying a greater Reſpect to the Subject, and the *Action* renders it yet more *lively* and *touching*; ſo that if it were reaſonable and lawful to put the *Scripture* ſtories into a Poem in the nature of a *Tragedy*, it muſt be becauſe that would render it more taking, and make it ſink with the greater force into the mind of the Reader, than in a plain, bare, and *unharmonious Narration*; therefore the ſame Reaſon and Motive will yet hold for the *Repreſentation*; ſince every days experience

proves

proves that the *Action* and the pomp of the *Theatre* add to the efficacy of the Poem, aud makes more ſtrong and lively Impreſſion on beholders, than a meer reading the ſame Poem: So that if it be lawful to put a Scripture ſtory into a Play, and even the moſt ſacred of all the Hiſtories, both the Old and the New Teſtaments, that very Reaſon that juſtifies the writing a *Tragedy*, ſtands yet as ſtrong for the *Acting* of it; for the fooliſh objection about *Geſtures* and *Geſticulations*, we ſhall conſider that before we part; but now we muſt run through the reſt of the inſtances brought for the Confirmation of this *Syllogiſm*.

F. Firſt, let me add a word or two to the former proofs, as the Pulpit in Sermons takes but one Text, of perhaps but one line, to explain and recommend in the whole diſcourſe, ſo the *Drama* takes but one of thoſe excellent *ſententious obſervations* on the frailties and accidents of humane life, which are to be found in *Eccleſiaſtes*, or any other moral part of the Bible: this he explains and enforces by a great and pathetic example.

L. But all this Illuſtration (not Confirmation) of the ſeveral parts of his *Syllogiſm*, is highly ridiculous; for thus he proceeds— *Can any of them give us more ſurprizing Inſtances of the ſudden turns of fate and Revolutions of Providence, than the deſtruction of* Sodom *and* Gomorrha, *of* Pharoah *and his Hoſt*, &c. If I ſhould grant him this, it wou'd not be the leaſt advantage to his Cauſe, ſince he allows Scripture Stories to be made into Plays; thoſe Stories are more emphatically ſet before us, and tho the Poet cannot give us more ſurprizing, he may at leaſt give us more in number, and thoſe which will more nearly touch us, when we obſerve them to proceed naturally from thoſe Follies and Vices which we find every day among our ſelves. 'Tis juſtly obſerved, that to make their Characters *pity'd*, you muſt not make them guilty of *ſcandalous* Vices, ſince thoſe reach not the generality of Spectators; and we only pity what may befal on our ſelves, or ſome of ours; ſo when the inſtances are *miraculous*, and out of the conſtant Courſe of nature, they are not only few in number, diſtant in time

and

and place, but of a kind which every man thinks himſelf ſecure from, as not guilty of thoſe Crimes that caus'd them. The caſes of *Sodom*, *Pharoah*, and *Senacherib*, are too ſingular to hit us, without a long Chain of deduction; but inſtances of ſudden turns of Fortune, which we ſee proceed immediately from the Follies and Vices that ſpread through *human Nature*, we find our ſelves more nearly touch'd with, what may fall to our own lots, if we avoid not the Vices, which we are yet but too much inclin'd to hearken to, when *intereſt* and *paſſion* perſwades.

F. This will hold good againſt his next Paragraph.

L. And as for that which follows. [*Are they able to expoſe Folly and Falſhood to more Contempt, than the ſacred Scripture does, which tells us, that a poor and wiſe Child is better than an old and fooliſh King*, *Eccl.* 4. 13. And that tho the Bread of deceit and falſhood be ſweet to a man, yet afterwards his mouth ſhall be fill'd with Gravel, *Prov.* 2. 17.] 'Tis nothing to the purpoſe; for firſt the *Stage* ſets before their Eyes *what Folly and Falſhood are*, not in bare terms,

terms, which want a comment, but in ſo plain and viſible a dreſs, that you know them off the Stage when you meet them every day in your *Converſation*, or in your *Negotiations*, in your own *inclinations* or *practice*; ſo that after the Spectator or Hearer has been ſhown the lively draught of *Folly and Falſhood* on the *Stage*, he muſt know it where-ever he meets it, and avoid it both in himſelf and others, if he be *capable* of *Correction*. Mr *R——th* may perhaps know, that every man is *not capable* of amendment. *Bray a Fool in a Mortar*, &c. But I hope he will depart from his *his* Folly, now 'tis expos'd, and not incur that cenſure.

F. But has not God appointed the Miniſtry (ſays he) *to teach all Nations, to obſerve whatever he commanded*, Mat. 28. 19. *To diſtinguiſh betwixt tha precious and vile*, Jer. 15. 19. *To prove, to rebuke, to exhort, to teach us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world*, Tit. 2. 12.

L. He ſays true; yet contradicts his own *precept* in his *practice*: If the Miniſtry are appointed, why does he pretend

tend to teach the *Miniſtry*? what, like another *Nailer*, does he ſet up blaſphemouſly for the Son of God? or like *Mahomet*, for the *Holy Ghoſt*? the only *inſtructer* and *teacher* of the Miniſtry? He impudently argues the *Clergy* guilty of the neglect of their duty, &c. ſo that if he ſets up for the *Cenſor* of one Body of the *Clergy* or *Miniſtry*, and will have them negligent of one important *duty*, why may not I condemn another *order* of the Miniſtry as negligent of ſome other? and give as good inſtances too? So the frolick goes round? But I have a greater reſpect and veneration for the Clergy of all Bodies of Chriſtianity, than to preſume to lay that to their charge. But from his own aſſertion of the Pulpits being negligent in its duty, 'tis not ſo criminal to ſupply that defect another way; and for all that he has ſaid to the contrary, the *Stage* may yet be allow'd to do it.

F. You have I think ſufficiently confuted, and ſhewn the abſurdities of this *Chapter*; let us haſte on now to an end, for to be ſo particular, will prolong our diſcourſe beyond the time that I can

ean ſpare to throw away on ſuch a trifle.

L. I muſt confeſs, to ſay all that might be ſaid, to clear all the work, he has, by his incoherencies, falſhoods, and falſe reaſoning cut out, wou'd be too tedious an undertaking at preſent, ſince I deſign a *defence* of the Stage in a different method from any yet attempted, and ſhall reſerve my moſt forcible arguments for that time; finding I have no great need of them to you to whom the *malice* and *weakneſs* of this Antidramatiſt are ſo evident.

F. Tho I am fully ſatisfy'd, both of the fallacy of his Reaſoning, and the ignorance and malice of his Quotations and Calumnies, yet I like to have my Opinions confirmed by the Reaſons of a Friend, of whoſe Judgment I have ſome Opinion.

L. O, Sir, your Servant——but to ſtop compliments——let us proceed. The next Argument of the *Pariſan* Doctor gives beginning to his 6th Chap. He allows that *Aquinas* ſays, that *'tis the part of a wiſe man ſometimes to unbend his mind by diverting words or actions*; but will not allow that this is any advantage

vantage to *Plays*, quarrels with the Doctors Logic, and ſo goes on in imaginary Triumph. But by his leave theſe words may more fairly be brought in defence of the *Drama*, which conſiſts only of *diverting* words and actions. If he allows not the Dr.'s arguing he'll allow his own, and then we are ſecure of the Authority of *Aquinas*, conſidering that he himſelf preſently admits of the *lawfulneſs* of the *Plays* allow'd by St. *Thomas*, " *Officium Hiſtrionum, quod ordinatur ad ſolatium hominibus exhibendum, non eſt ſecundum ſe illitum*, that is, *Stage Plays, which are directed to recreate or ſolace, are not unlawful in themſelves. This is quite another work, that our* Stage now *aſſumes* —— *and had the Stage held* there, *and been* Regular, *and Moderate in its practice.*

F. What then ? it wou'd have been *Lawful* ? is he at laſt come to a *Regulation* of the *Stage* ? will it do under any form or Regulation ?

L. He is not yet come ſo far over--- Have a little patience, and he will anſwer your expectation ; at preſent he only owns, that it wou'd not have been ſo *culpable as now it is.*

F.

F. This again makes evident what has been ſaid before, that he is not angry at *Plays*, if they wou'd be *content* to be *meer diverſions, without any improvement to the mind, or any preſervation againſt* Vice *and* Folly, *but that when once* Plays *come to be ſaucily improved to turning our looſer and more unguarded hours of pleaſure, to the benefit of our Morals*, &c. *Plays become unlawful.*

L. But this is covering their nakedneſs with Fig-leaves: he goes on.

F. What does he mean by ridiculing the Scripture? what apply a Scripture Phraſe to prophane Plays?

L. No interruption, but let me go on——He is a priviledg'd perſon, and may ſay what he pleaſes; either for, or againſt the *Stage*, the *Church*, the *State*, the *Scripture*, &c. But to go on, where you interrupted——*This was not its* original *deſign, if we may believe* Tertullian, *it was invented by the Devil*, &c.

F. But what if we will not believe *Tertullian*, againſt the known Hiſtory of the *Drama*, its *Riſe*, and *Progreſs*, what then?

L. But ſuppoſe *Tertullian* in the right, muſt Churches be deſtroy'd; becauſe they were erected to Idols? he muſt be more unacquainted with Hiſtory, than he would have others thought to be if he does not know, that many of the *Temples conſecrated* to *Idols were exalted into Chriſtian Churches*, by ſome of thoſe very *Fathers* he quotes againſt the Stage. He muſt know nothing of the Converſion of *England*, by *Auſtin* the Monk under Pope *Gregory* the Great, if he does not know of this converting the *Pagan* Temples into Chriſtian Churches even here too. Did the *Diſſenters* in *Oliver*'s time object againſt the Parochial Churches, becauſe the Idolatrous Rites of the Papiſts had been performed in them, and yet it might as juſtly be ſaid of them, as of the *Theatre*, *that they owe their original to the Devil.* At this rate there is nothing ſo ſacred and holy, but muſt be abdicated as having at leaſt been applied to the Devil's ſervice. But if we can turn the Devil's invention againſt himſelf, where is the ill of it? But this is true *Cant*, *Noiſe*, and *Zeal*, without *Reaſon.*

F. To compleat his Character, he is reſolv'd to have one touch with the Fathers too. He has borrow'd all the Arrows their Quivers afforded againſt the Stage, and now they have done his buſineſs, they may ſhift for themſelves; and that quietly too, if they wou'd eſcape his *Drawcanſir*-like fury, *ſeeing they* (the Fathers) *are the principal Quivers whence the former* (the Papiſts) *draw all their Arrows againſt the Proteſtants, and whence the latter pulls darts to hurl againſt the* Puritans.

L. Before I go farther (ſays he in the beginning of his paragraph) I muſt—do what? why abuſe the *Fathers* worſe than any body elſe has done, in making them the Arrows of *Popery*, and with one blow ſtrikes at them, and the Church of *England* too in allowing *Popery*, and has but the ſame weapons.

F. Well then———either their Authorities are good againſt the *Proteſtants* and *Puritans*, or they are not; if they are not good againſt them, why are they good againſt the Stage? why muſt they be in the right in one, and in the wrong in the other?

L. Why? becauſe the *News-monger* will have it ſo; but he may ſay the Papiſts miſunderſtand them, but does the Church of *England* do ſo too againſt the Diſſenters? if Mr *R——th* will ſay ſo he may, for he may ſay any thing; but then he muſt allow me to ſay the ſame of him and Mr *Collier* in their quotations againſt the Stage. Thus it being plain that Mr *R——th* will not allow the *Fathers* when againſt his reaſon, 'tis as evident that their Authority is rejected by all ſides, when they oppoſe either Reaſon, or what appears ſo to them, whom they are produc'd againſt. From hence it will follow, that his ſubſequent quotations of Fathers and Councils are not to be regarded; *Firſt*, as being nothing to the *Controverſie* in hand, and *next*, becauſe they have been abundantly anſwer'd already. Mr *R——th* uſes an unpardonable impudence in forcing their *Authority* on the *Stage*, whom he himſelf is ſo far from thinking *infallible*, that he does not really allow them ſo much as the Authority of Hiſtorians; and teſtimonial proofs of the diſcipline of the Church in the very

times

times they liv'd in, which is the leaſt that could be granted them. I therefore paſs to the *Divines of the Church of England*, ſince they are more likely to be Judges of the matter, as being more near and converſant with it, than the *Fathers*, who cou'd have no notion of what they never ſaw, as has been obſerv'd by one of the defenders of the *Stage*.

F. He begins with Mr *Weſtley*, the Author of the Life of Chriſt, an *Epic Poem*.

L. But all that Mr *Weſtley* ſays, is nothing to his purpoſe of condemning the *Stage*; for he begins with the Approbation of the *Drama*—*Moral Repreſentations* are own'd to be in this nature, *not only innocent*, but even *uſeful*, as well as *pleaſant*—A ſevere Authority this againſt the *Stage*.

F. But you paſs over the beginning of the Charge, which in Mr *Weſtley's* words as quoted by Mr *R——th* runs thus——*Our infamous Theatres ſeem to have done more miſchief than* Hobbs *himſelf, or our new Atheiſtical Clubs, to the Faith and Morals of the Nation.* This, ſince Mr *Weſtley* only ſays

it, may perhaps be, with a Poetick Licence, an *hyperbolical Zeal*, or ſo, and may be as reaſonably confuted with a denial; but when hereafter I have time and opportunity of Books, I ſhall more fully diſprove the matter of fact; here in his *off-hand* diſcourſe 'tis enough to obſerve, that while he condemns the *Abuſe*, he allows the *Drama* itſelf, not only as *innocent* and *pleaſant*, but even *uſeful*; and in ſo doing he does not diſſent from Archbiſhop *Laud*, King *Charles* the Firſt, and the then governing part of the *Church*; and ſince 't is confeſs'd *uſeful*, 'tis worth the *Reforming*.

L. To proceed to Dr *Horneck*, the next he quotes againſt the Stage, and yet he too, *whoſe Remembrance is ſtill ſavory*, as our Author Confeſſes, does not cry down all Repreſentations of *Hiſtory* or mens Actions in the world, as *unlawful*, but only wou'd have the *Abuſes* Reformed, and who is there that takes a Juſt and True delight in the Noble pleaſure of the Stage, that wou'd not have it brought to its niceſt perfection? the wiſe and proſperous ſtate of *Athens*, made ſeveral

ral laws for the regulation and attention of the hearers, and if Mr *R——th* and Mr *Collier* aim'd at that they wou'd not have been ſo much in the wrong, nor given way to ſuch apparent *malice* and *falſities*. He has given us the quotation of Doctor *Bray* by halves, yet ſuppoſing it all the material part, and the connection and ſenſe unbroken, only ſhews the Dr impos'd upon by a miſtake of *Tertullian*'s and the *Fathers*, as has already been made out: or that what he ſays is only meant againſt the abuſes of the Stage. Thus you ſee he has quoted but three Divines againſt the Stage, and two of them are plainly for it, and the other two may be ſo taken.

F. But with ſubmiſſion to Doctor *Bray*, Dr *Horneck*, aud Mr *Weſtley*, I take their charge very much to exceed the bounds of Reality, or at leaſt of evidence, and that what they have urg'd is more a Rhetorical Flouriſh, or a ſupererrogatory Zeal, than the true reſult of Matter of Fact.

L. That I do not queſtion to make out hereafter, in the Book I have before promis'd you. From theſe Drs in

Divinity he proceeds to a Dr in Phyſic, Sir *Richard Blackmore* by name; and becauſe that learned and ingenious Gentleman in his Preface to Prince *Arthur*, complains of the abuſe of the Stage, he brings him againſt the Stage in general, expreſly contrary to that Gentleman's words and intentions, as is evident from his praiſe of the *Mourning Bride*. Whether Sit *Richard*'s Charge be well grounded or not; or will hold good in its parts, I ſhall have occaſion to examin in the fore-mentioned Book.

F. From the Moderns he ſtarts back to the ancient Divines of the Church of *England*, among which he places *Bradwardine*, a Popiſh Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*.

L. How, a Popiſh Archbiſhop? then he is reſolv'd to out-do Mr *Collier*'s Biſhop of *Arras*, *tho* (to uſe his own words) *it is much for the honour of our Author, to borrow Arrows from a Popiſh Quiver.*

F. This gives ſome light to his former Reflections on the Church of *England* Divines, in drawing thoſe darts to hurt the Proteſtants.

L.

L. But all theſe quotations from the ancient Church of *England* falls under what has been ſaid already to the *Fathers*, and to the three Modern Divines for *Authorities*, without *evidence* on their ſides, are of ſmall regard or force with wiſe and honeſt men. The *Drama* is own'd *uſeful* even by this *Fellow*, that writ againſt it, in the very inſtances he himſelf produces of *Apollinaris*, *du Pleſſis Mornay*; the *good Chriſtians*, the *Primitive Proteſtants*, &c. by Mr *Weſtley* and Dr *Horneck*, if it be *uſeful*, what ſignifies ten thouſand mens Opinions againſt it? Opinions and Heats can do no prejudice to real Truth. The Sun will be the Center of the Univerſe, or at leaſt of our *Turbillion* or *Vortex*, the Earth will be globular, and ſo prove the *Antipodes*, *&c.* tho St *Auſtin* and a thouſand more breathe out *Anathema's* and Curſes on thoſe that held that Doctrine, which is now as *evident* as that there is a *Sun*.

F. Well, give me a man that does not do his work by halves. He has done now with the *Fathers*, both Ancient and Modern, and as an *irreſiſtible* Blow, he now comes to attack the

Stage

Stage with its own Members. *Repenting Poets*, that could not live by the *Stage*, and finding the falſe appearance of *Godlineſs* would be more gain to them, broach'd a thouſand *dull* and impertinent lies againſt the forſaken Theatre.

L. That 9th Chapter I take to contain both *fully* and *falſhood*, and yet what it urges reaches only thoſe Players who live debauch'd lives, and the abuſes of ſome (ſuch as the Repenting *Poets* themſelves) who ſpoke by experience and practice, that frequented the *Theatre*. But this argumeut will hold even again *Conventicles*. Don't we know that how free ſoever the reſt may be, there is one not far from the *Theatre*, where Men and Women meet; nay, and on other deſigns than the *Spirit*: where there is ogling too; with *Reverence* be it ſpoken, and laughter too; yet from hence it would be forſaken on ſome *penitent meeters* owning their tranſgreſſion there in this kind: I fear a certain honeſt Gentleman in *Black* would not thank him for his reference, or wou'd let him fall with the reſt, that would take hold of his Cloak; nay, yet

farther,

farther, to the utter confuſion of *Dancing Maſters* and *Boarding Schools*, this will hold againſt them in as high a degree, as *Ovid*'s Authority will reach my Lord Mayor's Show too. Nor will his preſent Majeſty our Gracious Soveraign King *WILLIAM* eſcape, for the ſeveral *Dramatick Repreſentations*, and *Interludes* perform'd before him at *Kenſington* by *Thenard du Meſny*, &c. Nor yet for his Birthday *Balls*, &c. Nor can the late Queen of *Bleſſed Memory*, or her preſent Royal Highneſs be ſecure from his Cenſures in the *Balls* ſhe is pleas'd to have ſeveral times in the year, ſince Noble Men and Ladies meet there together, ſet off with their greateſt Ornaments, of which the pomp of the *Theatre* is but a painted ſhadow, as I may ſay. All the Royal Family are extreamly oblig'd to this *furious Scribbler*, and he has great cauſe to complain of thoſe that writ againſt thoſe principles, he ſays this happy Revolution was built on.

F. Beſides, this inſtance of *Goſſon* is not to be depended on, ſince his Book is not extant, and has nothing but Mr *Prynn* or *R——th* to ſupport its Authority,

Anthority, who pickt up Authors ſcarce ever heard of before or ſince.

L. Next, admitting theſe Authors to have writ thus, it may be (as has been hinted) they might have been a couple of ignorant Raſcals, whoſe Plays always miſcarry'd through their dulneſs, ſo were refus'd the Action of more. And therefore they publiſh'd in revenge theſe ſlanders againſt the Stage; and I ſhould be ſo far from believing the Truth of it the more (with Mr *R—th*) becauſe deliver'd on their own Knowledge, that from that very reaſon I ſhould ſuſpect it the more, or ſhould at leaſt conclude, they put their own particular Practice on the general.

F. This has been done by ſome of our wou'd-be Saints in former times; and this is more than probable, when we find it confirm'd by Mr *Heywood* in his Apology for Actors.

Nay ſome, whom for their Baſeneſs
hiſs'd and ſcorn'd,
The Stage as loathſome has long
ſince ſpewd out,

Have

Have watch'd their time to caſt in-
venom'd Ink,
To ſtain my Garments with——

Theſe are the words of Tragedy introduc'd by that Author, making a Speech in defence of the *Drama*.

L. The reſt of the Book is directed in Anſwer to ſome Gentlemen that reply'd to Mr *Collier*, who being far from a Confutation by this *Scribbler*, are of the beſt Judges whether he be worth anſwering. Therefore let us run over the bulk of the Book, while I ſhew you three or four Places, which may have ſome little relation to the matter in hand. He would have the Author of the *Review* conſider, whether the Opinion of theſe three Reverend Biſhops, *&c.* be not more than enough to outweigh his banter or flouts? and I wou'd have him conſider whether the Opinion of Archbiſhop *Laud*, King *Charles* the *Martyr*, for ſince he ſo much abhors the murder of that Prince, perhaps he looks on his Authority as a farther conſideration of ſome moment) Dr *Igger*, Dr *Gentiles*, Dr *Caſe*, and all the Reverend Biſhops, and dignify'd

Go-

Governing Clergy, and both *Univerſities* of that *Age*, are not more than enough to out-weigh his dull malice, his falſe reaſoning, and infamous defamations, without the amends of ſo much as *banter*.

F. Next, as anſwer to the Authority of the *Review*, (as an inſtance of more weight than his Renegado Poets) he quotes a paſſage out of *Xenophon Convivium*; of *Bacchus* and *Ariadne* being acted by a *Syracuſian* Boy and Girl: whether he has *faithfully* tranſlated or not, I can't now decide, not having that Author by me, yet from the very ſtory itſelf it gives all the ground in the world to believe it a forgery; ſince common experienee of as good *Actors* as any *Boy* and *Girl* could be, convinces that there is no ſuch effect as he pretends in nature.

L. But admitting the truth of the *Matter of Fact*; this very inſtance is doubly againſt him; for firſt it proves that the *ancients* had their Plays acted, not barely read, (for *Xenophon* liv'd in the time of *Euripides*, &c. being the diſciple of *Socrates*, who us'd to frequent, nay, as ſome ſay, help'd to write

write ſome of the *Tragedies* of that Poet) and ſecondly, that the moſt *criminal* or *ſuſpicious* part of action in the *tendereſt* part of *Love*, had the beſt effect that could be deſired, by theſe prudent States, *viz.* the promoting *Marriage* and *Generation*. But perhaps this *Scribbler* may be ignorant, that by the Laws of ſome of the *Greek States*, it was puniſhable not to Marry at ſuch an Age, or to remain long in Widowhood; ſo that by this lively Action of the ſuppos'd Boy and Girl, here was a law of the Country promoted more than meer duty, had been able to do before, for—*at laſt*, ſays he, *when the Company perceiv'd that they were claſp'd in one anothers arms*, thoſe that had no Wives ſwore they would marry, and thoſe that were marry'd, took Horſe and went home to their Wives immediately.

F. Very well; and what could they reſolve or do better? I hope Mr *R——th* is no Enemy to *Marriage*, or the Duties of a Husband to his Wife? I hope he will not find fault with what made the Husbands take Horſe, and go home to their Wives *immediately*? perhaps

haps he would have had them more Friends to the *Vintner*, and by the way have taken a ſtirrup Cup of a Gallon, and ſo have gone home drunk, as uncapable of looking Matrimony in the Face ſober. This may be Mr *R—th*'s caſe, but you ſee the *action* of this Play would not let them have time to debauch, nor even to ſacrifice one Bottle to God *Bacchus*; that had by his Repreſenter there ſo promoted *Love*; but forced them to take Horſe, and Whip and Spur home to their Wives. I wiſh I could believe this inſtance, or that the Wives and Maids would Credit it, we might hope the Theatres would be throng'd indeed; for the laſt might have expectation of Husbands quickly, and the firſt to find their Husbands kind by the influence of the Stage.

L. I ſuppoſe Mr *R—th* will call this banter too; yet admitting the truth of his own inſtance, 'tis the ſerious *Comment* on it; and as for the foregoing inſtances of *Domitia*, and *Meſſalina*, they are only proofs of the Debauchery of thoſe two *Roman Ladies*: and at moſt of two *Roman Players*: but

but what is that to the *Body*, if Mr *Heywood* in his before quoted Book has ſufficiently anſwer'd all this about *Aurelius*, *&c.* tho in none of the beſt Styles, yet with good Reaſon for the moſt part, and what neither of theſe Anti-dramatiſts have in the leaſt anſwered. What he charges on the *Stage*, of cauſing *Seditious Tumults*, *&c.* is highly *precarious* and *uncertain*, and evidently no more than what might be charg'd on all *Publick aſſemblies*, even to my Lord Mayors Shew; little frays and *drunken quarrels* which were far from proceeding from the doctrine of the *Theatre*, but from that of the *Bottle*. As we have now adays ſome Rakiſh Fops, who when they are grown valiant by means of the Bottle, will then ſhew their Proweſs in diſturbing the Ladies with drawn Swords; but it is ſo far from proceeding from the *Stage*, that it diſturbs the doctrine which the *Stage* advances, and deſtroys its intereſt, which can never be reaſonably thought the deſign of the *Poets* or *Actors*, or indeed the natural reſult of the *Stage-Plays*. That *Conſpiracies* ſhould be laid at Plays is almoſt Impoſſible; or if they were, 'tis no doctrine of the *Stage*, and only

the effect of very *fooliſh* Conſpirators, to conſult of ſecrets of that conſequence in ſo numerous a Congregation. Nay, the *Stage* is ſo far from raiſing *Tumultuous Seditions, &c.* that it repreſents the evils that attend them. *But any ſtuff is for our Authors turn, if it fills the bulk of his Book, and anſwers his Malice.*

F. Suppoſing this true, which I am very far from admitting as ſo) will he thence infer, from two or three inſtances of diſorders, that the *Stage* ſhou'd be *ſuppreſs'd.* He will not admit of that way of Arguing in all things I'm ſure. *My Lord* Bacon in his Eſſay under the Title of *Unity in Religion*, ſays that *It is certain that Hereſies and Schiſms are of all others the greateſt Scandals, yea, more than the Corruption of Manners: for as in the Natural Body a wound or ſolution of Continuity is worſe than a Corrupt humour, ſo in the Spiritual.* If this be true (as will by and by appear) whence proceeds theſe *Hereſies* and *Schiſms?* from the *Pulpit*, not the *Stage.* The *Stage* meddles not with thoſe *doctrines* of *Religion*, that falls within the notion of *Hereſie*, but teaches by *Examples* the *Morality* that ſhou'd be, and is in all true *Religion.* Therefore, will Mr

R—th

R——th have the *Pulpit* ſilenc'd becauſe *Schiſms* aud *Hereſies* are and have been there begun, and ſpread about the World? I believe not, yet this is what he wou'd have hold againſt the *Stage* for a leſſer Evil, which neither he nor any of his Collegues have been able to prove againſt it; except by bare and *precarious Aſſertions*, which can have no force with any one, who is not ſo fooliſhly ſlaviſh to ſacrifice his Reaſon to an *ipſe dixit*.

L. To prove in ſome meaſure the Truth of my Lord *Bacon*'s *Aſſertion*, we muſt view the effects of *both*; then we ſhall find more *violent diſtractions, more Murders, Treaſons, Aſſaſſinations, and Plots, Conſpiracies, Civil Wars, Subverſion of States, and the other Innumerable Evils*, that are the neceſſary conſequences of theſe terrible cauſes, and effect of the firſt than of the laſt; as the death and ruin of *Milton*'s miſerable people; ſtrange and horrid violation of all things *divine* and *humane*; *Rapes* and *Sacriledges*, and a long train of *Melancholy Miſeries*, that reach all Degrees, all Ages and Sexes. Can Mr *R—th* or any other Maſter of Impudence equal to his, deny that theſe things have not

been the effect of Hereſies, and Schiſms; are not all Hiſtory full of Matter of Fact? which cannot be denied? when all that is brought to prove the evils of the *Stage*, as to Corruption of Manners, is falſe ſuppoſition, without one probable example of the Truth of it. Tho the *Evils* of the *Pulpit* are not only manifeſt, but even manifeſtly worſe, yet the *Stage* is to be ſuppreſs'd, but not the *Pulpit*. The inſtances from *Tacitus*, *Moicus*, *Aurelius*, *Suetonius*, only reach the *turbulency* of the Roman *Players*, or *Audience*; which yet kept within the walls of the Theatre; but the diſtractions of the *Pulpit*, like a deluge, have over-flow'd all *Europe*. If the *Roman* Players were diſſolute people, and the refuge of that Nation, the *Greek Players* were Men of *Honor*, and the firſt *Quality*, who were on the *Stage* fitted for great *Embaſſies*, &c. If our *Actors* have more of the *Romans* than the *Greeks* compoſition, let not the Art be Condemn'd for the perverſeneſs of ſome of the worſt Artiſts; but let it be put into hands that can and will reform *that evil*. For as the ill *Lives* of ſome of the Clergy are no Arguments againſt the *venerable* Body, ſo neither in Juſtice

ſtice can the ill *Lives* of ſome *Players* be an Argument againſt the Art it ſelf. But by the Conduct both of Mr *Collier* and Mr *R*——*th* you may evidently ſee that *Juſtice*, *Truth*, and *Reaſon*, were the leaſt things they thought of. A freſh inſtance of this in the latter is, his quoting *Cæſar Balingerus*, about 35000 being ſlain in a tumult rais'd at a *Circ-play*, as he calls it, which is proof either of his *malice* or *ignorance*, for the *Spectacles* in the *Circ* had no more likeneſs to a *Play*, than a Horſe-Race at *New Market*, and any diſturbance happening there on the concourſe of people, might be with the ſame reaſon charg'd on the Theatres in *Drury-lane*, and *Lincolns-Inn-fields*; for as now in *Florence* they have Horſe-Races in the Street, at one time of the year, ſo in the Circ, one of the chief *Spectacles* was a Horſe Race, which I never before imagin'd any part of a *Dramatic Performance*. To this he might have added, that at the Circean *Spectacles* exhibited by *Theodoſius* the Elder (whoſe Authority he quotes againſt the Stage) of *Theſſalonica*, where that Emperor ſlew as many thouſand of the Inhabitants of that City, on a particu-

lar grudge, without regard to Age, Sex, and Condition, Criminal or Innocent; for which he was excommunicated by St *Ambroſe*.

F. So that if his quotations are of any force, 'tis for ſuppreſſing of Horſe-Races, and *Lord Mayor*'s *Shews*, and then our wou'd-be *Saints* themſelves wou'd be partakers in offence with the wicked. But to anſwer him in this particular, let the Lord Mayor and Jockeys take care, if it be worth their while; for it has nothing to do with the *Stage*, yet it holds as good againſt theſe *Spectacles*, as his other inſtances againſt the *Stage*; which can conclude nothing, ſince we are ignorant of the Motives of thoſe Princes and States that have ſuppreſs'd the Theatres. If thoſe whoſe hands they were in, could not keep them in good order, perhaps they were in the right to ſuppreſs them, but that is not our caſe.

L. States have Condemn'd by Laws the ſame things they have afterwards eſtabliſh'd; ſo that there can be no fair Concluſion drawn from them againſt the *Stage*. There might be inſtances enough given of this even here at home, of *Acts* made and abrogated; the ſame thing

thing forbid, and afterwards allow'd, and enjoy'd. The difference of times, of Current Accidents, *&c.* alter the ſtate of things, but to give an Inſtance which will run through as many ſtates almoſt, as Mr *Collier* and *R——th* have run the Condemnation of the *Theatre*, I will chooſe the Practice, and *Science* of Medicine, now ſo fixt and eſtabliſh'd in all Countries. *Pliny* aſſures us, that there was ſcarce any noted Kingdom or Nation in the World, who did not reject it as ſoon as it was Received. *Hippocrates*, to omit the fabulous part of the Hiſtory, as to *Apollo*, and his Son *Eſculapius*, was the firſt that form'd that *Science* into a Body, from his own Experiments; and the Phyſic-Tables hung up in the Temple of *Diana* at *Epheſus*. On his death, his Diſciples being leſs ſucceſsful than their Maſter, the practice of that Science was utterly forbid by the Senate of *Athens*, and the Profeſſors baniſh'd that Country. So ceaſed for 160 years, till *Chryſippus* aroſe and was as great among the *Argians* as *Hippocrates* at *Athens*. *Chryſippus* ſet up againſt the Reputation of *Hippocrates*, in advancing a new method, and ſo grounded diſputes for his Succeſſors,

which ought to be followed, till the *Grecians* ſuppreſs them both, affirming, that *Honour and Life ought never to become Matter of Diſpute.* After this *Greece* was an hundred years more without Phyſicians, till *Ariſtrato*, *Ariſtotle*'s Nephew appear'd, who had one of the beſt Fees ever Phyſician met with, for curing *Antiochus* the firſt, of his diſtemper in his Lungs, *viz.* a Prince's Daughter, a Thouſand Talents of Silver, and a Cup of Gold. His Diſciples again brought ſuch Evils on the people, that the Senate of *Athens* forbid the *reading* and *practice* of *Phyſic* for the future among them. Thus this Science was driven for another hundred years out of *Europe*, till introduc'd into *Sicily* by *Erperices.* Then after another long Interval, *Herophilus* ſtarted up in *Rhodes*, either the Maſter or Scholar of *Ptolomy*, (for that is diſputed) but after his and his Diſciples deceaſe, Phyſick was baniſh'd for near 800 years, both *Europe*, and *Aſia*, till *Aſclepiades* appear'd in *Metelenes*, or *Lesbes.* *Antonius Muſa*, a *Grecian* Phyſician, who had a *parpleory Statue* ſet up to him for curing *Auguſtus*, was afterwards for exerciſing Amputation (a neceſſary part

of

of Chirurgery ſometimes) ſton d to death by the *Roman* people, and after that they came to a Reſolution never to admit Phyſicians any more among them; which was kept invio able till the infamous *Nero* (ſays my Author) in his return from *Greece*, brought Phyſicians and Vices enough with him. After the death of *Vitellius*, the good Emperor *Titus* baniſh'd both Orators and Phyſicians; for this reaſon, that the former were deſtroyers of good Cuſtoms, as the latter were Enemies of Health. *I baniſh'd Phyſicians* (purſued he) *to prevent Vice, for 'tis well known, where they Reſide for the moſt part the People are very wicked.* *And* Cato Uticenſis *writing to* Marcellus *out of* Greece, *among other Reflections on the Manners of the* Grecians *of that time adds this*——*Yet I muſt tell you, Son* Marcellus, *Phyſic is like to prove moſt dangerous to our Commonwealth; for the people here has long ſince reſolv'd to murder thoſe by Potion they can't Conquer by Arms. I every day obſerve theſe Doctors quarrelling among themſelves, not how they ſhall Cure, but how they ſhall Kill their Patients; but I enjoyn you, Son* Marcellus, *forthwith to adviſe the Senate, of the Arrival of the*

Phy-

Phyſicians lately ſent from hence, that they may not be ſuffer'd to read or practice their pernicious Myſteries among you. I might proceed to run this Hiſtory into a greater Extent, but here is enough to ſatisfy you that States have at different times, and for different reaſons, baniſh'd the moſt uſeful things as wicked and pernicious. So that there can no fair proof, as I ſaid, be drawn for the Condemnation of a thing, from the Authority of either Men or State Opinions, for an accidental Current of Faction, often influences both; ſo that the Controverſie ought indeed to be reduc'd to the thing itſelf, without regard to the noiſy pretences of Authority, which are ill underſtood for want of knowing their true Circumſtances and Motives if fairly quoted; but they are moſt commonly wreſted, and perverted to ſerve the turn of Paſſion and Intereſt, and imperfectly and falſly cited by thoſe that produce them for any point, that they wou'd maintain in Religion or Hiſtory, two things which have an immediate dependance on Authority; and yet we find in the Controverſy betwixt the Proteſtants and Papiſts, how both ſidesCharge each other with wreſting

ing or falſe quoting the Authorities againſt them ; and where Authority can have no real influence on the Matter, 'tis only a glaſs, a ſophiſm, a popular falacy to amuſe the uncautious, and ſupply the want of true reaſoning, for their falſe and malicious Reflections. And therefore to be rejected, or if they muſt be allow'd, we ſhall give our Enemies Authority for the uſe and excellency of *Dramatic writings* before we have done.

F. As for the Philoſophical Authorities, they are of no validity ; ſince moſt of the ſame men have ſpoke as much, or infinitely more for it. *Ariſtotle* is quoted againſt it, who writ a whole Book of Rules for the writing of Plays ; and thus in his State Authority, he quotes that of *Athens* againſt it, which took ſuch peculiar care of the *Stage* and *Stage Poets*, as to give *Sophocles* the Government of *Samos* for the writing one Play call'd *Antigone*. Thus too in his quotations he brings the Poets againſt the Stage, but forgets that the ſame Poet *Ovid*, in his *Art of Love*, ſaid as much againſt the Temple, as has been obſerv'd againſt Mr *Collier*. He goes on as he begun, 'tis no matter how

well

well theſe things have been confuted, his Readers he ſuppoſes have not been juſt enough to themſelves to read them. Therefore he tells us that it ill becomes any man to queſtion *Tertullian*'s *veracity* in matter of Fact, like this (p. 139) that is of the Divils taking poſſeſſion of a woman in the Theatre, which he calls his own ground. Now firſt *Tertullian* ſpeaks it not of his own knowledge, but by Report, and the Fathers Zeal makes him too Credulous; next the very ſtory is too like thoſe of the poſſeſſions of Popery, ſo that even this ought to bring it into queſtion; and laſtly, if it be ſo unchriſtian-like to queſtion *Tertullian*'s veracity, we muſt ſuppoſe him *infallible*; and Mr *R—th* to my knowledge will not ſtand to *Tertullian*'s Award in other matters, and why muſt we in *Matters of Fact like this*? what, becauſe 'tis againſt the Stage? but granting the ſtory true, I can ſee no relation it has to our Stage. For if the very Temples of the Idols were the Devils Houſes becauſe they were conſecrated to falſe Gods, ſo were the Theatres, which were no leſs ſo among the Heathens, as is too notoriouſly known for even Mr *R—th*

to

to be ignorant of. Thus his inſtance of the Player at *Bath* 1630, and Mr *Braithwait*'s dying Gentlewoman of good note. The firſt is only of one mans opinion, and of no more force than a certain Apoſtates from the Proteſtant to the Popiſh Faith, who is deſirous to have his Children alſo forſake what he had left, on his Death-bed declaim'd againſt the *Reformation* in as Criminal Terms, as this nameleſs Player, yet I hope he will not have the Speech of this dying Renegade of force againſt Proteſtantiſm? The Reaſon for one will hold good againſt the other.

L. But not to waſte time in confuting Follies, I ſhall give an inſtance or two in anſwer to his Inſtance, which makes at leaſt as much for the Stage as thoſe can do againſt it. At *Lin* in *Norfolk*, the Company of Strolers under the Patent of the Earl of *Suſſex*, Acting the ſtory of *Fryar Francis*, in which the Ghoſt of her Husband haunted perpetually, a woman, that to enjoy the more ſecurely her Lover, had murder'd him; at the ſight of which, a woman of that Town, of good Reputation, being at the Play, cry'd out my Husband, I ſee the Ghoſt of my Husband me-

menacingand threatning me. This outcry caus'd a nearer examination, and the woman both there and before the Juſtice and Judge, own'd her ſelf guilty of poiſoning her Husband, to gain a young man ſhe lov'd, and that her Husbands Ghoſt threatned her in that which was repreſented on the Stage. This Story you have in Mr *Heywood's* Apology for Actors; and then were People alive, that knew the Truth of it: he gives two other inſtances which are as Remarkable; one hapning but 12 years before he wrote the Book. A Company acting late at night at *Perin* in *Cornwal*, ſome *Spaniards* were landed the ſame night unſuſpected, and undiſcover'd, with intent to take the Town to plunder and burn it, when Juſt on their *Entrance*, the Players (as ignorant as the Towns-men of any ſuch attempt) Preſenting a Battle on the Stage with their Drums and Trumpets, gave a great alarm, which the Enemy hearing, imagining that they were diſcovered, after ſome ſhots to no purpoſe, retir'd with Confuſion to their Boats, and made haſte away. The third happen'd at *Amſterdam*, at the acting the laſt part of the four Sons of *Aymon*, toward

the

the laſt Act of the Hiſtory, where on the Labourers murdering penitent *Renaldo*, by driving a Nail through his Temple, a grave Matron-like Woman ſhriek'd out, O my Husband, O my Husband, and ſo in a diſtracted manner was conducted home; where languiſhing in the ſame Condition, the Sexton of the Pariſh brought a Scull he had dug up, with a Nail driven into the Brain-pan, but this Report coming to the Womans knowledge, ſhe own'd herſelf guilty of murdering her Husband 12 years before, by driving a Nail into his head in the ſame manner as was repreſented in the Play, and was by her own Confeſſion Condemn'd and Executed. Now I think from theſe inſtances I might as well infer, that the Stage has been Inſtrumental to the diſcovering ſeveral Murders, and ſaving Countries and Towns from Fire and Sword, which is the dreadful Conſequence of War, as what he has fooliſhly and maliciouſly drawn from his inſtances. That of the Devil's appearing at the *Bell-ſavage* in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign is highly ridiculous, and a forgery of *Prynn*'s. However it ſhews what ſort of wits his Book muſt take with, for tha

Pla

Play has been acted often ſince without any ſuch event.

F. That is indeed too trifling to be remembred, unleſs it be to ſhow what wretched ſhift theſe *Anti-dramatiſts* are driven to, when they Rake together ſuch childiſh ſtories; But to the next Chapter, of the Scriptures not being ſilent againſt the Stage. The Author of the *Review*, and Mr *Heywood* before him, have obſerv'd that ſince the Scripture has not been particular againſt ſo *crying* and *notorious* a ſin, as the *Stage*, when it was actually and ſo univerſally practic'd in the very time of the Apoſtles, and in the very places were they practic'd both in *Greece*, *Aſia*, and *Rome*, and when the Doctors of the *Gentiles* had read the *Stage Poets*, and quoted from them, by conſequence cou'd not be ignorant of the Evils of them, 'twas a good Argument for the Stage; but Mr *R——th* being deſtitute of an Anſwer to theſe Gentlemen, is ſatisfy'd to think, that he does enough in awkwardly turning the Reviwers words on himſelf, p. 144. and 145. For the queſtion here is not what good the Stage may do, but what ill it has done: how *deteſtable* it is, *&c.* For before he attacks

tacks the aſſertions in favour of the *Drama*, he muſt make good thoſe Accuſations brought by himſelf and his Collegue Mr *Collier* againſt the *Stage*.

L. Beſides, his invertion of the *Reviewer*'s words will not hold, for ſince thoſe kind evangelical Guides have dropp'd words in favour of the *Stage*, by reading and quoting its *Poets*, without any ſhadow of Reproof, or the leaſt Caution againſt ſo prevailing a pleaſure as that was in thoſe days, we may with the higheſt reaſon conclude, that St *Paul* and the other Apoſtles were not of either Mr *Collier* or Mr *R——th*'s opinion of the pernicious conſequence in the corruption of *Manners*. Nor is the *Stage Condemner* any more in the right, p. 149. in his Aſſertion about St *Paul*'s quoting the *Inſcription* of the *Altar* to the *unknown God*; for the Caſe is far different. But for quietneſs ſake, let us ſuppoſe it the ſame. Will Mr *R——th* deny St *Paul*'s approving their Adoration of the *true* incomprehenſible God? Since St *Paul* immediately proceeds to perſwade them to a true belief in the *unknown God, whom they worſhipp'd ſo Imperfectly, will he ſuppoſe St* Paul *inſiſted on a falſity,*

whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you, Acts 17. 23. *And that the unknown God* worſhipp'd by them was not the true God preach'd by St *Paul*? If he dares let him (who dares do any thing that is impudent) charge the Apoſtle with promoting *Truth by Lies*; for I ſuppoſe God had left *ſufficient means* of ſpreading the Goſpel of Truth, without the help of tricks and lies; but it ſeems Mr *R——th* thinks not; let him enjoy his *Blaſphemous* notions of the matter without a Rival; let him, that is ſo violent againſt the Stage, pleaſe himſelf with Blaſpheming the Goſpel, that as he attacks the defence of Virtue one way, he may villify the foundation of Religion the other. Theſe are Acts worthy the *Anti-dramatiſts* performing, and *Trophys*, none but he or his Colegue wou'd be fond of bearing off. Again, St *Paul* found, or thought, that thoſe Poets had ſome Authority with thoſe to whom he quoted them; now ſuppoſing he knew this, (elſe it had been to no purpoſe to have quoted 'em at all), it muſt have been his incumbent duty, I humbly conceive, when he was teaching the Doctrine of Humiliation,

and

and Repentance to them, to let them know that they were no longer to receive any Inſtructions from thoſe Dramatick Poets, which were diabolical in their inſtitution, and had been ever true to their Founder; but when he was ſo far from this, that he ſeeks to confirm his own Doctrines (for the confirmation of which he wanted not Miracles) from them, it was evidently to exalt, not depreciate the Authority of thoſe *Dramatick Pieces*, with them that paid already ſuch a deference to them; he that had wrote againſt the danger of corrupting their *Faith* by the vain Philoſophy of the *Grecians*, wou'd in all probability, on ſo fair an occaſion too, have given them as great a Caution againſt the *vain Poetry* of the ſame People, whoſe influence was far longer, and of more general extent; eſpecially ſince, as the Fathers quoted, and the Modern enemies to the *Stage* will have it, this was as deſtructive to the Moral part of *Religion*, as the vain Philoſophy cou'd be to the objects of a pure *Faith*. And the Sermons of our *Bleſſed Saviour*, from his own mouth, were more tending to our *Morals* than our Belief; ſo that this ought, by our Saviours exam-

ple, to have been as much St *Paul*'s care as the other.

F. He entitles the Chapter *the Scripture not ſilent againſt the Stage*, yet gives not *one* inſtance where the Stage is touch'd by it: for the inſtances he produces are levell'd at the *Luxury of the world*, which is only meant of thoſe that place their affections in fine Cloaths, *&c.* and thoſe above their condition; for the decencies of *order* and *degree* are not to be confounded without diſſolving the bonds of humane Society, and that could never be the aim of *Goſpel*, of *Love* and Unity. How neceſſary the Pomp and Splendour of Princes and Magiſtrates is, and ſo in their degrees of the Nobility, and Gentry, is too obvious to any conſiderable man, to require thoſe proofs that might be brought for it, and which if Mr *R—th* allows the Authorities of States and Governments in this, he will find confirm'd in all *Ages* and in all Nations of the Chriſtian, as well as in the *Idolatrous* part of the world. Nay, if we look into the *Conventicles* where we (by his direction) ſhould hope to find the purity of the outſides at leaſt) of the *Goſpel*, we ſhall find ſome of his ſanctify'd

fy'd *tradeſmens Wives* dreſt more gaudily than our *Nobility*, if not more Richly. This being ſo, 'tis evident as *Truth* that the dreſs and *equipage* of the *Stage* cannot be reach'd by thoſe *Texts* of *Scripture* againſt *Pomp* and *Vanity*, till they have pierc'd and cut through thoſe, whom the Stage only imitates in *dreſs* and *manners*, and that often to ridicule the fondneſs of that *vanity of dreſs* Condemn'd in the *Goſpel*, or the ſetting the Affection on them, as the *Beaux* and the *Bells* are ſuppos'd to do, and for what theſe Characters ridicule them: he may as well find fault with Sir *Godfrey Kneller*'s drapery, as Pomps and Vanities, for being like that of the perſons he draws.

L. To make his Book of a piece, he ſpares neither *living* nor *dead*; and quotes *Athenæus* and *Plutarch*, to defame *Sophocles*; though nothing to the purpoſe.

F. O pardon me, Sir—extreamly to his purpoſe; which is abuſe, right or wrong, *a clumſey dull Abuſe* is always to his purpoſe: therefore you are now at laſt in an error.

L. I own it—And therefore ſhall not wonder that either his ignorance or ma-

lice omitted the defence that has been made for *Sophocles* againſt thoſe Imputations by others of more *Candour* than either of thoſe he quotes; as for *Plutarch*, he often took ſtories and *Narrations* too much on Truſt, and that even to extravagance, as Mr *Van-Dale* and *Frontinel* have made very evident; where they confute his ridiculous ſtories about the death of the God *Pan*. If *Plutarch* brings a *Law* none beſides himſelf had met with, of the decay'd and expiring *State* of *Athens* againſt the *Stage*, that is not, nor ought to be of greater force, than the many Laws that were made for its advantage and *uſe*, when *Athens* was in its *Zenith* of *Wiſdom* and *Virtue*, as well as *Glory*.

F. True, for what was afterwards decreed to the prejudice of the *Stage* there (ſuppoſing it true) might be the effect of their dotage, not *Wiſdom*, being before faln from the *Virtues* and Conduct of their Anceſtors, who encourag'd the *Theatre*.

L. I think we may paſs to the laſt part of his Book, and take notice of p. 193. and p. 194. In the firſt part he aſſerts that, as a thing well known, which is known to be abſolutely falſe to all the

the world, that have ever read any thing of the matter. And that is, that the Plays of *Æſchylus*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, *Menander*, &c. were not *acted* but *repeated*, and read by the Poets themſelves; and to prove this he quotes a verſe of *Horace*, which he does not underſtand; or if it meant what it plainly does not, yet it cou'd have no regard to *Greece*, the opinions of thoſe two Nations being different, as their practice in this. But to prove the *Action* of the *Plays* of the *Greek Poets*, let any body read *Roſinus* or *Potter*'s *Greek* Antiquiries, the Reverend Mr *Barne*'s diſcourſe of *Tragedy* before his Edition of *Euripides*, *&c.* The *Odeum* or *Muſic Theatre* was not only for the Conteſt of *Muſic*, but the Plays were Rehears'd there till Perfect, and fit for the *Stage*. A farther proof is the *Perſona* or *Vizor*, which the *Grecians* wore when they Play'd, which was made to repreſent the *Hero* they *acted*; and from this the Players were call'd *Hypocrite*, as bearing the reſemblance of what they were not: Add to this the *Cothurni* or *high-heel'd Shoes*, their magnificent *Scenes* and Habits, to make all things of a piece, and anſwerable to the *Heroes* they perſona-

ted in the *Drama*, which was not done for a *bare reading* or *repeating*. The *Actors* were distinguish'd by their *parts*, and Mr *Barnes* gives you the names of some of them, and particularly of the *Protagonist* of *Euripides*, which I have forgot, not having the Book by me. But the very passages mention'd already, of the peoples rising up on the discourse of *Bellerophon*, shews that *Euripides* was not then himself on the *Stage*, since he came from behind the Scenes to appease them: As for what the *Poets* read themselves, they were *Poems* of another nature, as the *Epic*, *Elegair*, *Lyric*, *&c.* for all *Poems* were either read or sung publickly, and all the *Æneids*, if we may believe *History*, were sung by a famous Woman Singer of the *Roman* Stage.

F. This Assertion being thus prov'd beyond Controversie false, let us now proceed to what he says of truth.

L. That being indeed so remarkable in such a mass of Malice and Lyes, we will conclude with it, and our consequences drawn naturally from it, and it shall be call'd.

The Stage Condemner, for the Usefulness of the Stage.

P. 193.

P. 193.—*There being no body againſt writing of a Tragedy, or Poetical Dialogue, with ſeveral Acts and Parts to add Life and Luſtre to it.*

F. How no body againſt it? Lord, how a man may be miſtaken; I thought all this buſtle of Fathers, Philoſophers, &c. had been produc'd againſt the Drama under all Regulations, eſpecially when he was ſo poſitive of it in a thouſand places.

L. Pray let him go on, you ſee he's now honeſtly inclin'd—*Thus* Apolinaris *the Elder when he was forbid preaching by* Julian *the Apoſtate, or to educate Chriſtian youth in Learning and* Poetry, *compos'd divers* Tragedies *in imitation of* Euripides, *and* Comedies *in imitation of* Menander *and* Pindaris, *conſiſting only of Divine Arguments, and Scripture Stories, which he could not have the liberty to preach. Thus about the time of the* Reformarion *here in* England, *ſeveral* good Chriſtians propagated *the* Proteſtant Doctrine *under the veil of Dialogues, by way of* Comedy *and* Tragedy, *inſomuch that the Popiſh Clergy got them forbidden. By the 34th and 35th of* Henry *the 8th*, c. 1. *the famous* Du Pleſſis Mornay *writ a* Tragedy *of* Jeptha's *Daughter; the*

Great

Great Poet Buchanan *did the like. He writ alſo onother called* Baptiſtes, *and tranſlated into* Latin *the* Medea *and* Alceſtis *of* Euripides.

F. So far indeed he is very kind to the Stage, but he tells you immediately, *that it does not follow that theſe Great men approv'd the Stage.*

L. How? not approve the Stage? what does he mean by the Stage? did they not approve the Timber or Paintings, or the Lights, or the Company? I ſuppoſe that the former are not *Mala in ſe*, there is no natural and inherent evil in either the form or matter of the *Stage*, and I hope he will not ſay they diſapprov'd the *Company*, if they were compos'd as ours are, of the Nobility and Gentry. If thoſe that made the *Audience* at a *Sermon* made that at the *Theatre*, the Company meerly as ſuch muſt make both places equally unlawful; and this, by his leave, is a very Civil Complement to all the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation.

F. 'Tis lawful he owns to write a Play, which he formerly deny'd, but he denies it yet lawful to act it; theſe *prophane* and *villanous geſtures* are the things that ſtick in his Throat, and can't get down.

L.

L. What he means by that I don't know : For firſt, if it be lawful to write a Play, 'tis lawful to read it; and if ſo, I ſuppoſe to give it, in the reading its true *Emphaſis* cannot be Criminal; elſe 'tis not to read it properly ſpeaking. And if one may read out the whole Play and give it its true *Emphaſis*, why may it not be as lawful for two men to take it by turns,to avoid being tir'd, or even if a Lady be by, why may not ſhe alſo have her ſhare of reading it, if ſhe think fit. For if one man may read it truly, that is *Emphatically*, why not two ? and if two, why not three ? which is as much as the *Rule* of *Horace* allows to the Drama at once on the Stage. Now, if it be *lawful* to *write* and read in *Dialogue*, with the true force and energy of the expreſſion, why is it more *unlawful* to add the true life and luſtre of *action* to it ? the *action* cannot make the matter bad, if it be really good.

F. Oh *prophane and villanous geſtures* ! they are abominable ?

L. He had done but juſtly (tho that he is not fond of) to have let us known what Geſtures are *villainous* and what are *innocent*, for I hope all Corporal

poral Motions are not Criminal? is lifting the hand up, with ſhew or motion, turning to the right and left? a ſlow or haſty Walking, down-caſt or erected looks? puſhing off an Enimy from us, or kindly embracing a Friend or faithful Wife? which of theſe, or all, are the *prophane villainous geſtures* he means? there is no Geſtures uſed on the Stage, that ever I ſaw, more Criminal than theſe, or which were *immodeſt* to be uſed off the *Stage*. I can't imagin that the *topical* uſe of them, can pervert harmleſs Geſtures ſo much, unleſs it be with ſuch as Mr *R——th the Newsmonger*, who has ſo *prophane*, *villainous*, and *debauch'd a Prelate*, as to turn *innocent Geſtures* into *lewd libidinous Apprehenſions*, and ſuch violent *inclinations*, that they pervert every ſimple motion of the Body to ſuch unaccountable temptations, 'tis the fault of their *exceſs* of *Wickedneſs*, not of the Players, and therefore ſuch ought not to avoid *Plays*, but all humane Society; being the *Toads* and *Venemous Vermin* that ſuck poiſon out of every thing, be it ever ſo good or innocent; nay, if all Geſtures be Criminal, ſome Pulpits of Mr *R——th*'s acquaintance, will lye under

der his ſevere Cenſure. But he goes on—Buchanan, *in his dedication of* Aleſtis, *to* Margaret *if* France, *Siſter to* Henry 2*d*, *recommends that Tragedy to her, becauſe there is no mention in it of Parricide, Witchcraft, or other Crimes with which Tragedies commonly abound, ſo that by this he rather cenſures than approves the Theatre.*

F. By this 'tis evident that he uſes Theatres and Plays for one and the ſame thing, ſo that what he has produc'd for the Drama, will hold for the Action, as well as writing. But pray, ſince he has quoted *Buchanan*, and that Author I ſee lies by you, let us examin his ſincerity in theſe particulars.

L. Here it is——the words runs thus. *Eſt enim orationis genere leni, æquabili, & quod Euripidis proprium eſt, Suavi: Parricidis vero, & veneficii, & reliquorum, quibus alia Tragediæ plenæ ſunt, ſcelere nulla prorſus his mentio, nullum omnino Veſtigium. Contra vero conjugatis Amoris, pietatis Humanitatis aliorum officiorum, adeo plena ſunt omnia, ut non Verear hanc fabulam comparare cum libris eorum Philoſophicum, qui ex profeſſo virtutis præcepta tradiderunt ac neſcio an etiam preferre debeam.* Actis

enim

enim rerum ſermone, & ſpiritu pene animata, magis quam nuda præcepta ſenſus impellet, & facilus in animos inſtuit, & illabiter atque ubi illapſo fuerunt furninis hæret, & radices agit. For the Stile is gentle, equal, and what is the peculiar Talent of Euripides, *ſweet: but there is not the leaſt mention or footſtep in this of Parricide, Poiſoning, Witchcraft, with which other Tragedies abound. But on the contrary, the whole is full of the Duties of Conjugal Love, of Piety and Humanity; that I do not fear to compare this Fable with the Books of thoſe Philoſophers, who have profeſſedly made it their immediate buſineſs to deliver the Precepts of Virtue; and I do not know whether I ought not to prefer it even to them. For the* Action *of things almoſt animate with Speech and Spirit, ſtrikes with greater force on the* Senſe, *than a bare naked Precept, and with more eaſe flows and ſinks into the mind, and when it is there, 'tis more firmly fixed, and as it were rooted* —— Well, what think you now of our Author's ſincerity, in Alledging that *Buchanan* rather Condemn'd than Juſtify'd the *Stage* or *Drama*.

F.

F. Why, I think he reſolves to end as he begun; and that, with ſubmiſſion to his Judgment, I think he has given us occaſion to produce a Teſtimony of his own chooſing, to confirm all that we have ſaid for the *Drama*.

L. But ſince I hate to be niggardly too to him I'll give him one Authority more, whoſe validity he will not deny, and that is the divine *Milton* before his *Sampſon Agoniſtus*, it runs thus: Tragedy, *as it was Antiently Compos'd, has been held the greateſt Moraliſt, and moſt profitable of all other Poems: therefore ſaid by* Ariſtotle *to be of Power by raiſing pity, and fear or terror to purge the mind of thoſe, and ſuch like paſſions, that is, to temper and reduce them to juſt meaſure with a kind of delight, ſtirr'd up by the reading or ſeeing thoſe paſſions* well *Imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects, to make good his Aſſertion: for ſo in Phyſic, things of Melancholic hue and quality are us'd againſt* Melancholy, *Sowr againſt Sowr, Salt to remove Salt humours. Hence Philoſophers and other grave Writers, as* Cicero, Plutarch, *and others, frequently cite out of Tragick Poets, both to adorn and illuſtrate their diſcourſe. The Apoſtle* Paul *himſelf thought it not unworthy*

to inſert a verſe of Euripides *into the Text of holy Scripture,* 1 Cor. 15. 38. *and* Paræus *commenting on the* Revelation, *divides the whole Book as a* Tragedy *into Acts, diſtinguiſh'd each by a Chorus of heavenly Harpings, and Songs between. Heretofore men in higheſt dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to Compoſe a* Tragedy. *Of that honor* Dionyſius *the Elder was no leſs ambitious, than before of his attaining to the Tyranny.* Auguſtus Cæſar *alſo had began his* Ajax, *but unable to pleaſe his own Judgment with what he had begun, left it unfiniſhed.* Seneca *the Philoſopher is by ſome thought the Author of thoſe* Tragedies *(at leaſt the beſt of them) that go under that Name.* Gregory Nazianzen, *a father of the Church, thought it not unbecoming the Sanctity of his perſon to write a Tragedy, which he entitled* Chriſts Sufferings. *This is mention'd to vindicate Tragedy from the ſmall eſteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day; with other common Interludes, hapning through the Poets Error, of intermixing Comic ſtuff with Tragic ſadneſs and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar perſons, which by all Judicious has been counted abſurd, and brought in without diſcretion. Cor-*

ruptly

ruptly to gratify the People, &c. This is enough to ſhew what *Milton*'s opinion of Tragedy was, and that he agrees with *Buchanan*, from both of which we may conclude that Reaſon is on *our* ſide, Malice of Mr *R—th*'s. He has Accumulated abundance of unprov'd Charges againſt the *Stage*, and brought a Century of Witneſſes to prove juſt nothing at all but his own *infamy*. If he be angry at my manner of treating him, I muſt make his own reply to him, that he that has us'd the Church of *England* ſo abuſively, and with ſuch unparallell'd impudence, cannot expect to be very civilly treated by any friend to that *Church* of *England*, ſo eminent for its learned and pious Fathers, ſo pure in its Doctrine, ſo exemplar in its manners, like Virtue and Truth fixt between two extreams of Popery and Fanaticiſm: that has no Enemies but thoſe that are ſo to the Government, by King, Lords and Commons, for that I take to be the fundamental conſtitution: And tho Mr *R——th* be in ſuch a paſſion at the permiſſion of mens arraigning thoſe principles, on which this Revolution depended; yet I muſt tell him, he miſtakes very much thoſe principles; for

there was no parallel betwixt the oppoſition made to King *Charles*, and that made to the late King *James* the 2d; In the firſt the Nation was divided, and the Major part for the King, in the latter the whole people almoſt to a man (of the Proteſtant perſwaſion) were againſt him, and that ſhew'd the grievance and fears more viſible, and more eminent; and yet there was nothing done againſt him, no violence offer'd his perſon, when deſerted by all, and as is evident from the admirable anſwer to his Friend, Mr *Collier's Deſertion Diſcuſs'd*, he choſe rather to quit his Throne, than keep it with the juſt and limited prerogatives our conſtitution allows our Princes: If he invades the other two States, and ſhakes the very Fundamental of Religion and Property, I think Mr *R—th* and his Friends need never fear, but that the Church of *England* wou'd always have exerted its vigor and virtue, enough to ſuffer no ſuch Encroachment.

F. Prithee no more of this—— I think from a thorough examination of this *Jehu*, we have evidently vindicated both the Lawfulneſs and Uſe of the Stage; remov'd his Authorities, ſtated

the

the *Queſtion Right*, and ſhewn *Reaſon* entirely on the ſide of the *Drama*: Nay, and what is infinitely more to be wonder'd at, even Mr *R—th* the *Stage-Condemner* declaring that it promotes not only the *Moral Virtues*, but even the *Chriſtian Religion*, by *Apollinaris*, *&c.* in the *Primitive times*, and the Proteſtant *Doctrines* (which muſt be matter of *Faith*) for we differ not in points of Morality—under the veil of *Dialogues, by way of Comedy and Tragedy*, we have ſhew'd from Reaſon and his own Confeſſions, that *Action* cannot make that *unlawful* that is not ſo in itſelf, and truly I think his Book itſelf, rightly conſidered, is as good an anſwer to his Friend Mr *Collier*, as can be given him. And I think Mr *Collier*, if he has any ſenſe of the honour of that *Church*, of which he *was* at leaſt a *Miniſter*, ought *particularly* to acquit himſelf of the imputation of cauſing ſo much ſcandal to be thrown upon it. And inſtead of beſtowing his time as he has done, in anſwering Mr *Congreve*, and the reſt of his Opponents, who have much the advantage of him both in *Senſe* and *Juſtice*, and either anſwer'd Dr *Gager*, Dr *Gentile*, Dr *Caſe*, and Biſhop *Laud*,

King *Charles* the Martyr, and all the governing part of the *Church* of that time, or vindicate them from the ſcurrilous Abuſes of a profeſſed Enemy of his *Church*. The Matter of Fact is undeniable; the Books of thoſe Reverend Doctors are yet to be met with, and the Book of Sports, the encouragement of a *Stage* (fully as criminal as ours) notorious as any thing can be; tho in his Book he is pleas'd to ſay, that *Fletcher*, and the Poets of that time are more *Innocent*; which is ſo known a falſity that I wonder any man of his Gown (I mean when he wore a Gown) ſhould advance it; what at worſt on our *Stage* is expreſs'd in *double entendres*, was ſpoke more groſsly by them; they brought in places indeed not fit for the publick view, ours nothing that can reaſonably ſhock a chaſte beholder, that is not culpably nice: But the proof of this is too long for this time, ſince we have ſufficiently tir'd our ſelves already with the matter before us.

L. 'Tis well remember'd---and therefore I will only add this, that 'tis a good cauſe we defend, when *paſſion* and lies are brought againſt it, and which, like other *Truths*, will prevail as

as ſoon as people are cool enough to conſider *truly* of its real Merits.

The End.

A Character of the Animadverter, and the Animadverſions on Mr Congreve's *Anſwer* to Collier.

SInce the foregoing Dialogue was began, the following lines were ſent me by an unknown hand. And finding him much of Mr *R--th*'s ſize, both of Honeſty and Senſe, I cou'd not refuſe him a place in the ſame Volume.

The Character.

The abuſe is deſign'd on the Poets, but proves a ſevere Satyr on Mr *Collier*; for 'tis a ſcandal to be prais'd by a Fool or a Raſcal; *one* affects our Underſtanding, the *other* our Honeſty: But to be extoll'd by both, is an *Infamy* too great for any of the injur'd Poets to be pleas'd to find Mr *Collier* under, in reſpect to his Abdicated Gown. This Pamphlet is pretty equally compos'd of fooliſh lyes, and *heavy* nonſenſe; for *pertneſs* might have made the dulneſs more tolerable. 'Tis writ in the Dialect of *Billingſgate*, debas'd into a de-

gree of Improbability, the railing tru Porter-like, *ſcurrilous* and *lewd*; and at the ſame time ſo awkward and nauſeous, that like the Drunkenneſs of the *Spartan* Slaves, 'twou'd put any moderate ſinner out of Conceit with the Vice. He ſets up for an Aſſertor and Defender of Religion, with ſo viſible a *Cloven Foot*, that he confutes his own Doctrine, and diſappoints his own Malice: and his own Verſe reaches him both in his Poetical and Religious Capacity,

Without a Muſe, but more without a God.

His open Lyes, groundleſs Pride, perfect Defamation, diſarms the Scandal, and diſcover the Knave as well as Fool. He has by natural Inſtinct ſecur'd his Book from an Anſwer, under the impenetrable Buckler of *Nonſenſe*, infamous dulneſs, and all the juſt Anſwer that can be given him, is what was formerly return'd a Libel of much more merit than his.

Thus in thy own Porters Language I reply,
'Tis a Fool's Anſwer, and a Raſcal's Lye.

And I ſhou'd wonder that he that was Coxcomb enough to write ſo ſcandalous a thing, ſhould yet have Cunning enough to conceal his name, if it were not evidently owing more to his Fear than

than his Judgment. He tells us in his Preface, that he is an *Iriſhman*, I hope he means *wild Iriſh*, for nothing of this ſide of wild *Iriſh* cou'd ſure ever write ſuch ſtuff.

The only thing that has any ſhadow of Truth is his own Character, yet there, out of an exceſs of Self-love, he has been too notoriouſly partial to himſelf in curtailing his larger Infamy, and contracting his double Appellation of *Knave* and *Fool*, into the ſingle one of *Coxcomb*.

In ſhort, he ought in the next Edition of *R——th*'s Book, to be put into the number of Repenting Poets, and compleat the *Triumvirate* of hiſs'd Scribblers, that, incapable of pleaſing on the Stage, are fain to fly to the wretched Refuge of canting againſt it, and hope themſelves ſufficiently qualify'd by *Dulneſs* and *Debauchery*, to pleaſe the Enemies of the Theatre, with their fooliſh Invectives; and like batter'd Whores, that have out-liv'd the memory of their Reputation here, being tranſported to the *America* of Hypocriſie, they are thought to have ſtock enough of Honour and Conſcience, to ſet up for Reformers and Saints.

Having ſome Verſes by me made on ſuch another nameleſs Scribbler, tho of a much higher Claſs, I ſhall venture to tranſcribe ſome of them, begging the Author's pardon for the Alterations and Application; for his Picture, tho it will prove like other Draughts, much handſomer than the Life.

He has indeed the dreadful Serpent's hiſs,
But wants his Sting; his Bite's a toothleſs kiſs.
To ſhew that Spite alone is his pretence,
He ne're is guilty of one word of ſenſe.
His Pictures are like Country Daubers ſhewn,
But for the Names, they never wou'd be known.
The nauſeous Fops too ſcandalouſly mean
To raiſe my anger, or provoke my ſpleen.
For how ſhou'd Fools be thought to judge aright
Blind in their nature, blinded more by ſight,
Provok'd by envy of anothers ſtore;
Envy the wretched paſſion of the poor.
It is with indignation I'm confin'd,
To this dull nameleſs thing, that's of the pigmy kind.
Oh, that he cou'd his Infamy remove,
And a juſt object of my Anger prove!
Who thus ſecure attacks the Queen of Love.
'Twas thus baſe Bunnian *ſhot the* Volcian *Queen,*
Hid in the Herd the Coward ſhot unſeen.
Unſeen by her, but Opis *found him out,* (rout
And blew the trembling Daſtard, 'mid th' ignoble
The ſame's thy Guilt, but not the ſame thy Skill,
Rogue in thy heart, but impotent *in Ill,*
Thou haſt the malice, not the pow'r to kill.
Againſt thy ſelf th' inverted Dart's return,
And pierce thee thro with infamy and ſcorn:

While

While the bright *aim of thy enervate Lines,*
Exerts herſelf, and with freſh Glory ſhines.
Oh! may ſhe ſtill thy baffl'd Envy raiſe,
Whoſe Praiſe is Satyr, and whoſe Satyr Praiſe.
Thus 'tis the Coward rails, thus out of ſight,
For tho he dares to rail, he dares not fight.
Yet ſure thou *needſt no Drubbs nor Cudgels dread,*
Too ſafe in thy impenetrable Head.
Yet keep thy ſelf within thy native Night,
For ſhou'd thy perſon ever come to light;
Archelicus *his Rage ſhould arm thy Pen,*
Make thee ſo loath'd by Women, ſcorn'd by Men,
Till quite worn out by growing ſhame, thou chooſe
The Dogs and Villains ſureſt end, the Nooſe.
Thou Foil to Bunnian, Crambo*'s lewd diſgrace,*
Thou Scandal to the Ballad-*Scribbling Race!*
The Herd of Grubſtreet *tour above thy Flight,*
With joy look down ev'n from their humble *Height,*
And mid their dulneſs unknown Triumphs breath,
To ſee thee *groveling in the Abyſs beneath.*

FINIS.

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